
PEACE
BEGINS AT
HOME

Clara Beranger

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Peace begins at home

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Peace Begins at Home

Clara Beranger



UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY
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1954

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Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, whate'er you may believe.
There is an inmost center in us all,
Where truth abides in fulness . . .

and, to KNOW,
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendor may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without.

—*Robert Browning*

Is it not written in your law,
I said, Ye are gods?

—*Jesus*

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CHAPTER I

Overcoming Our Common Faults

THE GREAT DESIRE of individuals in every country of the world is for peace and security. We have discovered that the cessation of war does not automatically mean the establishment of peace.

Within a wide circle of acquaintances and friends, I have found that the only persons who have achieved true inner peace and serenity are those who believe in God and try to live according to the moral principles embodied in the Bible. They recognize the truth that peace begins at home. They know that in order to extend peace from the home to the world they must cultivate habits that create peace. At the same time they must free themselves from old habits that cause inharmony and dissension.

Because I believe that every one of us can and should be a link in the chain of world peace, I have attempted to set forth in these chapters certain common human faults and to present the spiritual means by which they can be changed to character traits conducive to individual and world well-being.

According to the latest figures, there are about six hundred million persons in the world who call themselves Christians. Some are Catholic, some are Protestant, and there are still others who consider themselves Protestant although they are not regular

communicants. In addition to Christians, there are over fifteen million Jews, from whose early religion Christianity is derived. The word Christian, applied first to the disciples of Jesus at Antioch, has come to mean any person professing belief in or following the teachings of Jesus.

Yet how many who call themselves Christians truly follow the teachings of Jesus or attempt to exemplify them in daily living? How many unswervingly live up to the ethical principles embodied in the Sermon on the Mount? How many follow the social laws and moral ideals set forth by Moses and amplified by the prophets and psalmists? Even among those who would not think of breaking any of the Ten Commandments, who believe in the moral codes of Moses and Jesus, there are many who digress from the path of spiritual living in ways that may seem unimportant but that reveal either a misunderstanding of religious principles or a careless disregard for them. This was true in the times of the prophets, who repeatedly exhorted their people to forsake their evil ways and return to goodness. And Jesus said to His disciples, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

Throughout the brutality and horror of World War II the vision and hope of world peace gave us courage to endure unprecedented sacrifice and misery. During the war, millions of persons all over the world prayed constantly for the cessation of hostilities, which to them meant peace. But the peace that Jesus referred to when He said, "Peace I leave

with you; my peace I give unto you," means more than the absence of war. It means day-by-day living in peace. Lasting peace will never be achieved until the things that make for war are rooted out of men's minds and hearts.

It is a truism that individuals make communities, communities make nations, nations make the world. Before peace can come to the world it must first be developed in the individual heart and shine forth in the individual life. Peace is not something that can be handed to us by politicians or military leaders; it is a state of mind that each and every one of us must learn to attain. The phrase "we must earn the peace" is more than five words; it means applying to a period free from war the same courage, the same desire to serve country, neighbor, and God; the same self-transcending compassion and love that are demonstrated so nobly during wartime.

The future of the world is an individual responsibility. As individuals we cannot sit apart in the belief that we need do nothing. Neither can we shift our responsibility to some other person or persons, or to an organization that we consider better suited for the work than we feel ourselves to be. Although each of us is only an infinitesimal part of the whole, it will take all of us working individually and collectively to bring about lasting peace on earth. The principle of individual responsibility for the whole was aptly expressed by Epictetus in the first century after Christ: "You are a citizen of the universe, and a part of it; not a subordinate, but a principle part.

... What then does the character of a citizen imply? To hold no private interest; to deliberate of nothing as a separate individual, but rather like the hand or the foot, which, if they had reason, and comprehended the constitution of nature, would never pursue, or desire, but with a reference to the whole."

"Boldly make a desperate push, man . . . for prosperity, for freedom, for magnanimity. . . . Dare to look up to God, and say, 'Make use of me for the future as Thou wilt.' "

To our sorrow, we know that the cease-fire orders of 1945 have not resulted in peace. A glance at the daily newspapers reveals a world still in chaos, with men and nations still full of selfish interests, fears, lust for power, and hatred. The world as a whole has not yet learned that only by obeying the commandments to love God and our neighbor as ourself can the things that make for peace—selflessness, courage, tolerance, understanding, and love—eradicate the things that make for war.

Today, as in every age, there is a minority of people who understand the necessity for spiritualization of the world. Religious leaders of all faiths preach that abiding happiness and peace can be enjoyed only by individuals living the spiritual life through consecrating themselves to an ideal higher than the satisfaction of physical or material desires, through performing service to humanity and to God. Living the spiritual life in an age of materialism is not an easy task, and it requires constant work in overcoming old race habits of thought, speech, and

action. Yet, if the desire for a change not only in our own lives but in the condition of the world is strong enough, we can, through faith in God and His ever-available help, so strengthen our spiritual powers that we shall be able to live serenely and happily in a stable, peaceful world.

Not many persons are fortunate enough to receive that inner illumination which gives instant realization of the Presence of God and converts the receiver to a consistently good and spiritual life. For the average man conversion to a belief in God means an understanding of his highest spiritual potentiality and a strong desire for regeneration, followed by the gradual surrender of bad human habits and the development of good habits. Like Jacob, whose first aspirations were for material success but who dreamed of a ladder set on earth and reaching to heaven, most human beings have to climb slowly, step by step, out of a morass of materialism into the rich full life of Spirit. Jacob is a symbol of the struggling man who steadfastly and courageously works to overcome human faults so that he may reach the highest peak of spirituality.

Every man has to solve for himself the problem of his relationship to God. Every man has to live his own life in Spirit. Every man has to wrestle with earthly temptations and to climb slowly and gradually out of darkness into light. In order to achieve spiritual perfection man has to concentrate all his energies on the task of overcoming his human faults. The prophet Isaiah said, "Thou shalt be called by

a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name." And in The Revelation of John, Jesus said: "To him that overcometh, to him will I give . . . a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it. . . . and I will give him the morning star."

In Biblical times a name was a symbol for the nature or quality of a person, place, or deity. Personal characteristics sometimes determined the name given a child at birth: Esau "came forth red, all over like a hairy garment," and his name means "hairy, rough, shaggy"; Jacob was born with his hand holding Esau's heel, and his name means "heel catcher"; Laban means "white." A change in the person's character or nature in later life often seemed to demand a change in his name. Thus, Jacob became Israel, meaning "who prevails with God." The account in the 16th chapter of Matthew tells how Jesus asked Simon who He was, and Simon answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Whereupon Jesus called him blessed and said, "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." Peter is a translation of the Greek word *Kephas*, meaning "stone."

It is only as we overcome our transgressions and live up to our highest ideals that we become worthy of a new name. Learning to rely on God's power instead of our own personal will helps us overcome our worldly faults and quickens our spiritual development. Setting our personal will above God's will prevents the growth of the spirit. To recognize the di-

vine Spirit, which dwells in each one of us, but to fail to work with it is the unforgivable sin.

Just what do we mean by sin? It is defined as a transgression of the divine law and an offense against God, as a violation of some religious or moral principle or of some standard of taste or propriety. Being a transgression, a violation of some law or principle is not a thing in itself, not a quality, but a lack of will or ability to develop positive qualities. It is not a principle but a departure from a principle, which by the immutable law of sowing and reaping carries within itself its own punishment.

When we know a principle to be right and fail to live up to it, we are committing a sin against ourselves. It may be a comparatively minor infraction, such as yielding to the temptation to overeat, which probably harms no one but ourselves. Yet because overeating is a disregard of the principle of temperance, it brings the punishment of physical discomfort, perhaps even physical disease. The greater the transgression, the heavier the penalty.

In his Epistle to the Romans, Paul said: "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Paul did not mean death of the physical body but of the moral sense that accompanies the spirit of life. When we depart from the line of thought or action prompted by the voice of Spirit within us, whether it be a small fault of self-indulgence or a major act of immorality, we are violating a moral principle and, sooner or later, must suffer the consequences. The source of

every transgression, every violation of a moral law is self-will, a following of what we will for ourselves rather than of what God wills for us.

We cannot hope to grow spiritually until we rid ourselves of the little failings or big errors that come from following the dictates of personal will. God gave us freedom of will, the power to decide whether we want the happiness and peace that result from following His way or the unhappiness and restlessness inherent in the human way. Happiness is the primary goal of all human beings. This has been so since man was created. We can achieve and hold happiness here and now by starting to discover in what ways we have disregarded the will of God. And we can set to work to correct our transgressions, to erase their consequences from our lives. We can so change our nature that a new name will be ours. We can come out of the darkness and receive the morning star.

How? By an honest attempt to understand ourselves and by an admission of our mistakes. Recognition of an error is the first step toward its correction. Jesus said, "Cleanse first the inside of the cup and the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also." It will not help us to make a fine show of spirituality and speak brave words of faith if we continue to hold onto our transgressions. Jesus repeated the same thought in different words, "And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the wine will burst the skins, and the wine perisheth and the skins." He meant that it is necessary

for us to rid our mind of evil thoughts, so that it can become a clean habitation for good thoughts.

Our first discovery of spiritual Truth is like new wine, stimulating in its immediate effect. We drink it in eagerly, without stopping to consider whether the receptacle into which we pour it is fit for so glorious a treasure. We do not take time to cast out the old bottle and acquire a new one. This is one reason why so many of us fail to receive the good we desire.

If we are to grow spiritually, to profit by the new wine of Spirit, we should be certain that the bottle into which we pour it is clean and new. We should concentrate all our energy on the elimination of habits of self-will and the building up of new habits consistent with the promptings of our inner moral sense. In both the erasure of old and the development of new habits we can at all times and in all places have the help of God. If we go to Him in meditation and prayer with a strong desire to erase bad habits and build up good ones and with a steady faith that God hears us, our words will not return to us void. Isaiah expressed it, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

The perfection that Jesus preached as the ideal of human endeavor means a lifetime of effort, of frequent backslidings, of steady courage to rise up and try again. As much as we long for understanding

and demonstration, we are hampered by old habits of doubt and fear, old temptations, old race influences. If we quietly recognize that it may take time to reach spiritual majority and that the process may involve a slow gradual advance, we shall not be turned aside by discouragement or doubt, but shall continue to pray without ceasing, with confidence that our prayers are being answered.

"Commit thy way unto Jehovah;

Trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass"
is the simple direction given by the Psalmist.

Instructing His apostles, Jesus said, "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." By use of the word become, which implies a growing, Jesus revealed His understanding that, although we must change and achieve the purity of heart and perfect faith natural to a child, we cannot accomplish it all at once. For the average adult, whose native purity has been obscured by years of ungodlike thinking and acting, conversion is a process of gradual growth and development.

Consistently to follow the will of God means constant surrender of self-will. Most of us know in what ways we transgress against the Spirit of good; and if we seek to live the spiritual life, we try to change our ways and erase our mistakes. Old habits have worn grooves in the subconscious mind that are comparable to markings on a phonograph record. The disc plays back the recorded lines over and over again until the tracings are worn off or the record is

broken. We know that Truth students investigating mental processes often seek to bring to light various disorders, neuroses, or obsessions, which are the recordings made on the subconsciousness by old instincts and desires and which frequently affect a person without his conscious awareness of them. The object of such investigation is to bring these hidden records out into the open and through spiritual treatment to direct the old desires into new channels and to help in the creation of a new emotional pattern.

In spite of religious faith and understanding of moral truth, our actions frequently fall below our ideals, largely because we have not cleansed the subconscious mind of old habits and impressions nor consciously redirected our false desires. We can erase the grooves that old faults have made in the subconsciousness by faithfully and steadily using our conscious minds to give directions to our thoughts. The subconscious mind not only receives orders from the conscious mind but acts upon them. It is our duty, therefore, to give the right orders, to use the creative power of the conscious mind to wipe away the old wrong markings on the sensitive wax of the subconsciousness, and to make new lines so deep they can never be erased. Only in this way can we develop a nature worthy of our divine birthright. And we can pray without ceasing:

"Clear thou me from hidden faults.

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous
sins;

Let them not have dominion over me.”

A good plan is to work on getting rid of one fault at a time; for by working on one specific fault, we direct the power that is ours by divine right to one focus and gain strength from the concentration of mental energy.

Each of the following chapters particularizes a common human fault and attempts to set forth the spiritual way by which it can be overcome. If we appraise ourselves and are aware of bad habits that have worn a groove in the subconscious mind, we can erase the lines of the groove and create new lines of good habits by steady affirmations of the particular good we wish to achieve. We can reverse every bad habit to its opposite good. We can always find in the Bible beautiful words that will be helpful to us during our periods of meditation and prayer.

CHAPTER II

Retrospection

AN INTELLIGENT and attractive young woman that I know was deprived of several years' happiness because of her failure to adjust herself to change. When she was thirty, her husband passed away suddenly. He had been making a good salary, and they spent money freely, buying on credit whatever they wanted. At the time of his passing, they had a town house and a beach house, each with a staff of servants. They also had three cars and expensive furniture and appliances in their homes. Neither the houses nor the cars were entirely paid for, and the husband carried no life insurance. Thus, to this young woman's grief was added financial worry for her own future and for that of her little girl.

Fortunately, she had worked before her marriage and she was able to find a good position. But since she was away from home all day, she had to retain a housekeeper and a nurse. Her friends knew that she was having a difficult time meeting all her expenses, but pride kept her from accepting their offers of help.

Although she put on a gallant appearance, it was obvious that she was deeply disturbed, mentally and emotionally. She talked constantly about Stephen, her husband, whose pictures were in every room in

the house. She wandered from one room to another tenderly touching the things that had been his, living again in memory the happy times they had enjoyed together.

I had known this young woman and her husband for many years and I saw her as often as our respective occupations permitted. I noticed that with the exception of the house in town her expensive possessions were gradually disappearing.

About a year ago, she came to see me. Her mouth was drawn, her eyes were red from weeping. She was obviously very unhappy. On several previous occasions I had been tempted to urge her to talk out her problem with me, but each time something warned me to keep silent. However, on this particular day an inner voice assured me that the time was right.

Gently I suggested that she unburden her mind to me. "There comes a time when everyone needs to talk things through with another person," I said. "Don't you think you have been fighting alone long enough?"

She burst into tears. "I don't see how I can go on. My earning power isn't enough to keep up the house, pay the maids, and feed all of us; and I'm getting more and more deeply in debt. I just can't see any way out."

"Have you ever thought of selling the house?" I asked. "It really is much too big for you."

"I hate the idea of parting with it," she answered. "Stephen put so much thought and love

into the plans and he adored every brick that went into it. But two months ago I told an agent that I would sell it."

"No buyers?"

"A number of people came to look at it, and one woman in particular was so enthusiastic that I thought surely she was going to take it."

"Don't you mean you were afraid she would take it?" I asked.

She looked startled. "Why, yes—I suppose I was. I suppose in my heart I didn't want to let it go."

Again the inner voice told me to speak. And these words of Paul came to mind: "Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before." I spoke them aloud, and before she could answer, I said: "You have been living in the past, holding on in thought to the emotional experiences and material reminders of Stephen. You will not be able to sell the house until you let it go mentally."

This was a new idea to her. After a while she nodded and said slowly, "I think perhaps you are right."

We had a long visit. Without referring directly to her own case, I expressed my beliefs on the subject of letting go of the past and of following Paul's avowed custom of not looking back. Before she left, she admitted that she had allowed herself to neglect the present for the past, that she had literally submerged herself in memories and regrets. She knew now that it was a mistake and she intended

to start at once to correct it. As a first step she would work and pray to sell the house.

"If you are sincere in your intention and in your prayers, you will sell it," I said. "You can't expect to sell it, though, when you hold it so tight in your heart. Let it go mentally; pray that the right purchaser may come along, and I feel sure you will be able to dispose of it."

A week later, she telephoned me in great excitement. "The strangest thing happened," she said. "The woman who had been here before came again. She told me that she loved the house the moment she saw it, but she had a strong feeling that I didn't want to sell, so she went away. Last night, at the very time I was praying about the house, the thought came to her mind that now I was ready to let it go. If ever I needed proof of the power of prayer, this is it."

The woman bought my friend's house and most of the furniture. My friend rented a smaller home, was able to pay all her debts, and is now free from worry and fear. Moreover, she has stopped living in the past and is again a happy normal-living person.

Continued grief over the loss of a loved one and living over the past in memory prevent us from living active, useful lives in the present. There is a legend about a Persian king who wanted a short axiom engraved on a signet ring. The king's counselors conferred and brought him this sentence: "Even this shall pass away." This is another way of saying that time obliterates all troubles, griefs, and un-

happy experiences. If we could have enough spiritual strength to meet any seeming trouble with the thought that everything passes away, we would save ourselves endless worry and unhappiness!

We know that nature, which is God in expression, heals physical wounds. In her unfathomable power nature also heals mental wounds and restores the mind to balance and power.

When one of His followers asked Jesus' permission to bury his father, Jesus said, "Follow me; and leave the dead to bury their own dead." Jesus meant that there was nothing more the man could do for his father, while there was much to be done in ministering to the living. Therefore, he was not to turn back but to go forward with Jesus, doing good works.

The greatest proof of love that the living can give the dead is not in the spending of time in personal grief, which accomplishes no good, but in the transmuting of this love into useful work. Abraham Lincoln expressed this idea in his famous Gettysburg Address: "It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here . . . to the great task remaining before us." Grief for yesterday transmuted into worth-while work for today turns sorrow into joy, futile inactivity into useful service. Past experiences should be a guide for the present and future, not an anchor to the past.

We can learn from the past much that will condition and influence our lives to our present advantage. However, keeping our thoughts on the past,

longing for what no longer exists, regretting mistakes we have made, mentally reviewing our sins tend to block the channel through which our present good comes to us. Even though memories of the past are happy, we cannot afford to look back on them too frequently, for by so doing we use mental power that should be applied to things at hand.

Gloating over old achievements or victories, being content with what we have done in the past is as much hindrance to growth as regret for past mistakes. In the 19th chapter of Genesis is the story of two angels who came to Sodom and warned Lot to take his wife and daughters and flee from the city before it was consumed by brimstone and fire. The angelic command was: "Look not behind thee." But Lot's wife disobeyed the order and consequently, was turned into a pillar of salt. Salt is a preservative. When we keep our eyes on the past our thinking becomes crystallized, and further growth is prevented.

Without growth, body and mind stagnate. We must forget old experiences, whether they are good or bad.

Jesus warned His apostles not to return to the earthly pastimes of eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building. He then cautioned them: "Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to gain his life shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose *his life* shall preserve it." While this is a command to let go of worldly pursuits and goods, it can also be interpreted to mean that spiritual growth and

fulfillment will come only by our relinquishing life in the past. If we do look back, we shall be destroyed.

Perhaps the greatest Biblical illustration of man's ability to forget the things that are behind and go forward to the things ahead is in the story of Paul. Before his conversion he was violently opposed to the teaching of Jesus. He helped stone Stephen and he persecuted men, women, and children who believed in Him. Yet he was able to forget all this and devote his life to the spreading of the Truth that he once condemned.

On the wall of the chapel of St. Gilgen, a small village in the Austrian Alps, near Salzburg, is the inscription that Longfellow quotes in his poem "Hyperion": "Look not mournfully into the Past. It comes not back again. Wisely improve the Present. It is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy Future, without fear, and with a manly heart."

How often we brood over a past experience, reliving it in memory, digging it deeper and deeper into our consciousness instead of driving it out and refusing it power over us! How often we hold onto thoughts of resentment against others for a real or fancied slight! How often we suffer remorse or regret over some mistake we have made! How often we boast of past deeds! Whatever it is that we retain in mind—resentment, anger, grief, hate, condemnation of ourselves or others, or self-glorification—we cannot hope to grow spiritually until we learn to cast it out. To dwell on an injury in thought,

to go over old defeats or old triumphs, to wallow in grief is a futile attempt to bring the dead to life, to retrieve the irretrievable. And it keeps our emotions so agitated that we cannot think clearly about the present nor face the future with hope and courage.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, "Resist not him that is evil." Those who try to express spiritual Truth in their lives know that they must learn to offer mental nonresistance to wrongs of any kind, to exchange negative thoughts for positive ones. Add to this the unassailable fact that the past cannot be recovered, and we see clearly the necessity for living in the present, for thinking and speaking and acting according to the immediate prompting of the Spirit of God within us.

To live fully in the present does not mean that we must adopt a philosophy of hedonism—of eating, drinking, and being merry because tomorrow we die, of putting off until tomorrow whatever is unpleasant or difficult or a barrier to the search for pleasure. Nor does it mean that we cannot profit from the past. If we have faith that what has happened in our life is preparation for our ultimate good, past experiences will serve as a guiding light in meeting the problems and issues of today.

To live fully in the present means that we are free in mind and heart from the shackles of the past and from fear of the future. It means forgetting and forgiving our own errors as well as the trespasses of others against us. It means appreciating and using

the gifts that God has given us, not only material things but gifts of love and life and beauty, of spiritual insight and faith. It means practicing the presence of God each and every day.

If you are one of those who look back on the past with remorse or regret or longing, you are not letting the dead bury their dead and going forward in the life of Spirit. If the habit of retrospection is restricting you in thought and action, you can rid yourself of the habit by steady affirmation of the virtue of living in the present.

Affirm: Today is mine. I live it with joy. I greet this day as a gift from God and count His manifold blessings to me. I practice the presence of God continuously. I am free from the past and rejoice in the present. I face the future with hope and confidence.

You will find in the Bible many thoughts for appropriate meditation and prayer.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:

From whence shall come my help?

My help *cometh* from Jehovah,

Who made heaven and earth."

"For a thousand years in thy sight

Are but as yesterday when it is past,

And as a watch in the night."

"So teach us to number our days,

That we may get us a heart of wisdom."

"Establish my footsteps in thy word;

And let not any iniquity have dominion over me."

"Into thy hand I commend my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Jehovah thou God of truth."

"Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old."

"Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

"Old things are passed away; behold, they are become new."

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content."

"And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more: the first things are passed away. . . . Behold, I make all things new."

CHAPTER III

Skepticism

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DURING WORLD WAR II, I knew many women whose sons were in the armed forces, and most of them were in a constant state of worry and fear. But one woman—an openhearted, trustful, pious mother with two sons in the service—never seemed alarmed or upset, even when she knew her boys were on the battle front. “I place them lovingly in the hands of the Father,” she told me, “and I know that He will protect them and keep them safe.”

When she learned that the Allied invasion of Europe was under way and that paratroopers were being dropped in enemy territory, she prayed with earnest faith for her paratrooper son. One night she had a vision that he was in danger and she saw him jumping from a plane. She prayed all night long. In the morning her heart was light, and she felt certain he was safe. Later, she heard that the paratroopers had landed on the same night she had the vision. They were surrounded by Germans, and most of them were either killed or taken prisoner. Her son was one of the few who escaped.

As the incident was later described to me by the paratrooper, himself, a wind had blown him and his parachute away from the others, and he landed in a field. He could hear shooting in the distance, so he

lay hidden until dark, and then he performed the task that had been assigned to him. The farmer on whose land he had dropped took him to the hide-out of a resistance group, and the paratrooper directed the work of this group until the American forces arrived.

This young man came through the war unscathed. "Before I jumped," he said, "I prayed, as Mother always does about everything. I never believed much in religion—I thought it kind of weak to rely on some Person up there—all right for women, but sissified for men who ought to be able to take care of themselves. But I was scared to death that night and needed help. God certainly must have been watching out for me when He sent that sudden wind. I don't talk about it much, but I know my faith in Him is here to stay. Once you have proved to yourself that faith works, you know it is true."

"Did many of your comrades believe in God?" I asked.

"I don't know. Soldiers are funny guys and don't like to talk about religion or God. But I'm sure that a lot of them prayed silently when they were going into danger."

Soldiers are not the only ones who hesitate about bringing God into conversation. We in America talk freely about personal affairs and emotional reactions. We discuss the state of the world and our own thoughts concerning it. We chatter about our homes and our children. But let someone bring up the subject of God or religion, and the average person tends

to shut up like the proverbial clam. Why is this? Why are we so reticent about our religious beliefs?

It is an accepted fact that western civilization has progressed further along scientific than along spiritual or ethical lines. Our faith in science and what it can do seems to have anesthetized or obliterated faith in things not seen and to have produced a philosophical climate of skepticism and agnosticism.

The old expression "I'm from Missouri. You have got to show me" and the modern "oh-yeah" attitude are indicative of a tendency toward skepticism. As a people we want to be "shown." We are apt to demand visual proof before giving complete trust. Tell the average person of today a story about something out of the ordinary and quick as a flash will come an "oh yeah?" Ask the average child whether he believes in Santa Claus, and he will scoff at you for even asking such a silly question. What a pity that the habit of relying on the evidence of the senses robs so many children of the joy of a beautiful illusion!

The letter written in 1897 by Francis P. Church, of the editorial staff of the "New York Sun," in answer to the question of a little girl named Virginia, "Is there a Santa Claus?" has been reprinted many times. Yet, because it gives so cogent an argument against destroying childhood illusions I shall quote part of it: "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know how they abound and

give to your life its highest beauty and joy . . . Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see . . . No Santa Claus! Thank God, he lives, and he lives forever."

The child who is allowed to believe in Santa Claus as the symbol of Christmas is likely to develop into the man who has faith in beautiful ideals. The man who puts his trust only in objective facts leads a life that is sterile and joyless. All the scientific facts available about life cannot teach us how to live. The biologist can tell us to the fraction of an ounce what chemical elements comprise the physical structure of the body, but he cannot tell us what the life force is that created the body and keeps it alive. The psychologist can analyze the human mind and give us facts about its actions and reactions, but he cannot tell us what consciousness is. Science, which has added so much to our knowledge of the visible and the tangible, has not been able to penetrate the secret of their source. But fortunately many of us are learning for ourselves that it is the invisible and the intangible that give to life its hope, beauty, and glory.

When Peter was commanded by Jesus to walk on the sea he had confidence enough to start. "But when he saw the wind, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me." Jesus caught him and said, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" When Peter believed he

could walk on water, he was safe. He started to sink only after he began to doubt.

The lesson of this Biblical story is obvious. We must have faith in ourselves and never allow doubt of our own power to prevent us from making the initial attempt or from holding onto self-confidence until we have accomplished what we want to do. We must have faith in our own ideas in order to develop them to their highest potentialities and we must not be deflected from our course by the skepticism of others. "For we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." Even the scientist who cannot see the law he is trying to formulate must have faith that it *is* or he would never give his time and energy to working from hypothesis to fact.

Those who are humble students of spiritual Truth have proved by experiment the incontrovertibility of the law of sowing and reaping as applied to thought and action. They know that thinking influences the conditions of their outer lives. They believe that if they think distrust, which is negative, they are setting into motion forces that will produce negative and unhappy effects. "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief." Nothing so surely hinders fulfillment of a purpose as doubt of the ability to achieve it.

Self-trust is strength and leads to success. Self-doubt is weakness and leads to failure. Jesus said, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you." If we wish to realize

in actuality our inherent possibilities, let us start by believing that nothing is impossible. "According to your faith be it done unto you."

In addition to trust in ourselves, we must have trust in others. An attitude of distrust or suspicion not only creates confusion in consciousness but often leads to disaster in the outer world. For example, I know a woman who was habitually suspicious of her husband, although he was fine and loyal in all his relationships. Under the pressure of a large business order he had to work at night, and she began to imagine all sorts of false things about how he was spending his time. When he came home from the factory, tired and longing for peace, she was in such a state of nerves that she created emotional scenes which made him angry and resentful. After a number of these unjustified scenes he felt that his working efficiency was being impaired and he left home. A spiritually wise friend pointed out to the wife that the breakup of her home was a direct result of her habit of distrust, which had blinded her to the truth of her husband's love and loyalty. Admitting her error, she asked her husband's forgiveness and begged him to come home. Their life, now based on mutual trust, is happy and harmonious.

Today, when there is so much distrust and suspicion in the world, when every individual and every nation longs for peace, we need to practice faith—faith in God and faith in ourselves. Our state of fear is similar to that described by Jesus in the 21st chapter of Luke: "And there shall be men fainting for

fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world." Everything that was predicted in this chapter has come to pass. Nations and kingdoms have risen against one another; there have been earthquakes, famines, and pestilences—"terrors and great signs from heaven." Stories tell of members of a family betraying close relatives and friends: "Ye shall be delivered up even by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends."

But Jesus did not leave His followers without hope. He said that when these things come, those who follow Him must lift up their heads and know that their redemption is near. And they must pray constantly. "Watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

We need to be extremely careful not to let current doubts and fears take root in our minds. If we want peace of mind for ourselves and peace for the world, we must eliminate the habit of distrust and work positively and dynamically for faith. Steadily, day by day and hour by hour, we must think and speak in terms of trust in ourselves, in other individuals, in groups, and in nations. Mutual trust between nations is the only foundation upon which permanent world peace can be established.

Scientific discoveries are made by a scientist having faith in the unseen. He starts with a hypothesis concerning nature, the human body, or the universe. With an open mind and infinite patience, he tests

his idea over and over until he proves it to be either right or wrong. When Thomas Edison conceived the idea of transmitting a continuous current of electricity through wire he persisted through more than six thousand experiments until he finally proved his hypothesis. Nothing but faith in himself and his vision could have carried him through to success.

The same sort of faith, the same willingness to prove the ideals and promises of the Bible is the first step in the acquisition of faith. If the skeptic would start with the open-mindedness of the scientist and attempt to prove a Biblical promise that particularly appeals to him, if he would keep at it patiently and persistently, he would succeed in demonstrating to himself that God keeps His promises, that steady, sincere prayer works. It is not only the great mystics who have demonstrated that reliance on God brings health, material benefits, and peace; but millions of faithful persons the world over have proved that God hears and answers prayer.

The reason so many persons today are worried and afraid is that, in spite of our material wealth, our physical comforts, we are spiritually starved. We have put comfort ahead of God. We have lost the solid anchor of faith. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus states, "No man can serve two masters . . . He cannot serve God and Mammon." And He instructed His followers not to take thought for their lives, their food and drink, or their raiment. "For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his

righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

If we would have peace of mind for ourselves and a steady faith in the potentiality of peace on earth, we must take spiritual nourishment. We must believe in our own intuition and listen to the voice of the Spirit of God within us. We must have strong enough faith in our own ideas to follow them through with patience and humility, even if those about us are skeptical of our ability to achieve success. We must trust the integrity of friends and neighbors even when they appear to be untrustworthy. We must believe that the perfect Christ Spirit dwells within every man no matter how un-Godlike he may appear to be. We must keep a firm belief in the essential good will of mankind in spite of external evidences of ill will. We must have faith in the beauty and order of the world in spite of the ugliness and disorder we read and hear about daily.

The Spirit of God is present in every man and in every nation. Through faith and prayer we as individuals can call forth this Spirit, can bring into realization on earth the promised kingdom of heaven. In the face of world conditions, it is imperative that each one of us do his share toward peace on earth by the establishment of peace within himself. Scientific advances have been made because of some physical need. The need for spiritual advancement is so urgent that it will require the combined efforts of all of us to overcome the evil of unbelief and to establish the faith that alone can save.

When one of the multitude following Jesus brought his son, who was possessed of an evil spirit, and asked Jesus to cast out the evil, Jesus told him that, if he believed, everything was possible. The father of the child cried out, "I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

There are many persons who are in this state of wanting to believe but who cannot entirely eliminate old doubts. The lifelong habit of believing only in the evidence of the senses makes it difficult for them to believe in anything invisible or intangible. And they cannot see or touch God. Neither can they see or touch electricity; but they feel free to use and trust its power, because they have found that it works. If they would only start with trust in God, they could prove His power and make it work as surely and effectively as they make electricity work. But to use electricity, they must turn it on by pushing a button or flipping a dial—by connecting the current with a physical instrument designed to conduct it, such as a light bulb, a vacuum cleaner, or a radio. The same is true of the power of God. We must connect ourselves with Him if we would bring His Spirit into active manifestation in our lives. Those who have had enough faith to make the initial effort, even though some unbelief is still lodged in their minds, have had demonstrations that God *is*; and in thousands of cases, whole lives have been changed by faith. Faith is the switch that releases God's power and makes it ever available for our use.

If, therefore, you are confused and unhappy, if you doubt your own power, if you are skeptical about the world and its inhabitants, you can lift yourself out of confusion and doubt by the simple act of closing the switch of faith. Wherever you are, whatever your need may be, you can come out of darkness into light, out of unhappiness into happiness, out of skepticism into trust—if you but take the first step—believe that God will help you. In the beginning you may have to be dogmatic in faith, to hold onto it blindly against the doubts and fears that conscious reason or old habits of thought grooved in your subconsciousness may present. But if you remain steadfast in faith and refuse to heed the promptings of unbelief, you will grow in spiritual perception until you realize that “what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear.” If you hold to a belief that God *is*, you will be able to prove for yourself the law of sowing in spirit and reaping in action. You will know, as surely as you know the physical facts of existence, that by speaking the word of faith you can, through the power of God, fulfill your desire. Both the Old and New Testament gives us assurances of this. In The Book of Job we find: “Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee.” And in The Gospel According to Mark, Jesus says, “All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”

Above all, you will find that faith grows with use. Starting blindly in the manner of the man who

said, "I believe; help thou mine unbelief," you will gradually but surely reach the point where you can exclaim with exaltation, "I believe!"

If you find distrust in any form in your consciousness, you can start at once to get rid of it. You can affirm: *I am trustful of myself. I have faith in the power of God to guide me to my good. I trust the goodness of others, because I know that the Spirit of God is in them. I am strong in the faith that "with God all things are possible."*

Your faith can be strengthened by prayer and meditation upon the promises found in the Bible.

"Jesus said unto him, if thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth."

"Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

"He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also."

"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?

Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:

If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there."

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,

And light unto my path."

"Blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed."

"The righteous shall live by his faith."

"Wait for Jehovah:

Be strong, and let thy heart take courage;

Yea, wait thou for Jehovah."

"Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me. And I knew that thou hearest me always."

CHAPTER IV

Fear

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ON A VISIT to the home of a young friend, I went out to the garden with her four-year-old daughter to see their new "jungle gym," a complicated mechanism of swings, parallel bars, and ladders designed for healthy exercise and play. Just as we entered the garden, the little girl's brother, a child of two, was climbing the ladder, laughing and shouting in great glee. The little girl scampered up after him, and the two children hung from the highest bars, edging along with their hands. The slightest mistake would have toppled them to the ground in what might have been a bad accident. My pulse quickened with apprehension. I glanced at the mother. Her lips were drawn tightly together, and her hands gripped the back of a chair, but she never cried a word of warning to the children. She smiled weakly at me and whispered: "I try never to put a thought of fear into their minds—it isn't fair to them. They are naturally confident and unafraid, and I want them to remain that way. God seems to be taking care of them. They have had no accident and they are getting stronger and more sure of themselves all the time."

I admired her faith and strength of character. Unconsciously she was following a theory that most of the fears which make human lives miserable are

not inborn or instinctive but arise from faulty training and guidance. In one experiment infants whose genetic histories were known were subjected to all kinds of unexpected stimuli—the sight of fire, dark furry objects, snakes, and animals; sudden and loud noises; falling through space into hands held out to catch them, and so forth. The results of this experiment indicated that the only two stimuli which provoked immediate fear reactions in the infants were loud noises and loss of bodily support.

How then have the countless fears that beset the human race and interfere with human efficiency developed? Why is it that scarcely a person in the world is free from fear of some kind? Some of these fears are hidden in the subconscious mind, others are manifested openly.

How much more sensible it would be if we could learn from childhood that there is nothing in the world to fear! How much happier our lives would be if we never had to experience the destructive emotion that frustrates our highest aspirations and runs counter to all that is vitalizing and effective in us! Montaigne in his essay on fear wrote: "The thing in the world I am most afraid of is fear, and with good reason; that passion alone, in the trouble of it, exceeding all other accidents."

Of all emotional habits that adversely affect both body and mind, fear with its shadow of worry is the most devastating. Whatever it is that we fear—animals, water, fire, high places, shut-in places, tyrannical power of individuals or nations, or any

other admitted or concealed fear—we know for a certainty that it is detrimental to happy and successful living. Consider the physical effects of sudden fear on the body, reactions that we can observe for ourselves. Our first impulse is to run away, but we are often “scared stiff.” We gasp for breath, we tremble, our knees shake, we get a feeling of terror in the pit of our stomach, we break out in a cold sweat, our heart seems to rise in our mouth. Fear even inhibits the normal action of the whole digestive system!

The only permanent cure for fear is faith—faith in a power that is limitless and omnipresent, that can serve as an anchor at all times and under all conditions, that is ours to draw upon and to use in times of need. The opposite of fear is courage born of faith. If we truly desire a life free from fear and worry and are willing to work for it, we can recondition ourself to develop faith instead of fear. Through our God-given power to control our own minds we can lift up our thoughts to what is good and constructive and direct our energies toward living a fearless, purposive life. We have seen how emotional states influence the body. Similarly, our habitual way of thinking conditions the outer circumstances of our lives. Positive and constructive thinking brings positive and constructive results. Negative thinking produces negative results. Since fear is negative and faith positive, we must substitute faith for fear.

The Bible constantly stresses the futility of doubt,

unbelief, and fear and the effectiveness of faith in God as an antidote to fear. Take, for example, the passage from the 27th Psalm:

"Jehovah is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
Jehovah is the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?"

Or in the words of Jesus, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Beginning with Genesis, we find faith regarded as a conscious religious act. Abraham, rich and successful, had so strong a faith in his ability to find God anywhere that he departed fearlessly from his own country for the new land of Canaan. His belief in the almightiness of God never wavered. "And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness." "Is any thing too hard for Jehovah?" The patriarchs, prophets, and poets upon whose lives and philosophies the Old Testament was founded repeat over and over the need for trust in the power, goodness, and love of God.

The words *trust* and *belief*, which are synonymous with *faith*, come from two Hebrew words, *āman*, meaning to believe, and *bātah*, to trust; and they are found frequently in the Old Testament. They reach their deepest significance in the story of Moses and the Exodus, in which God is presented as the constant object of the people's belief and trust in the face of all danger. But it is in The Psalms that active trust in God as the one power forever worthy

of trust is most often stressed. Over and over the Psalmist sings of his faith and confidence in God. "I *had fainted*, unless I had believed to see the goodness of Jehovah

In the land of the living."

"Blessed is the man that maketh Jehovah his trust."

"O my God, in thee have I trusted."

One of the psalms that has helped men to overcome fear in times of danger and given comfort in times of trouble is the 91st Psalm. In any epidemic of fear that seems to attack the whole world, we would do well to reread and meditate on this psalm and be reminded of the Psalmist's faith that whatever our outward trouble may be we can be delivered if we hold fast to belief in God's power and continually practice His presence in our lives.

Consider the opening verse:

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High

Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Literally translated from the original Hebrew, secret place means covert, a refuge provided by God as a protection from enemies. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says, "When thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, . . . pray to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee." The meaning, like the first verse of the 91st Psalm, is that by entering into our innermost consciousness and establishing oneness with God we can be certain that God hears our prayers and will guide and protect us.

"I will say of Jehovah, He is my refuge and my fortress;

My God, in whom I trust."

Could any statement be stronger or more faith inspiring than this short, simple verse? It assures us that God is a permanent stronghold, a safe shelter to which we can go trustfully in times of danger. When we seem threatened by new fears and dangers, when newspapers, radio, and television continually emphasize events that awaken fear, we can become calm by dwelling in thought on this powerful passage, by believing it with all our heart and by saying it over and over until the words are deeply engraved upon our minds.

In the New Testament faith becomes an act of supreme power, the greatest of all human acts and experiences. The demand for faith underlies all of Jesus' teaching concerning God and man's relationship with God; and this concept was carried on by His apostles. Paul's definition of faith is "Faith is assurance of *things* hoped for, a conviction of things not seen," and it has been used as the subject of essays, sermons, and religious lessons to stimulate hope and trust. Paul also gives a list of Hebrew characters from Abel through the prophets who, by faith, obtained the object of their desires. They learned by experience that God is "a rewarder of them that seek him."

Today humanity is sick in mind, sick with the fear of atom bombs and bacteriological warfare that could wipe out our civilization and plunge the world

into darkness. The only effectual cure for the mental illness that afflicts the world is a change of mental attitude, a realization that we cannot meet this crisis by physical or intellectual means alone. We must raise our consciousness to a level above physical force or material well-being and expand our inherent spiritual potentialities. History should serve as a warning that civilizations built on material glory or military power crumble into dust. Where is

"The glory that was Greece

And the grandeur that was Rome"?

The United States was founded on the spiritual ideal of freedom. Men and women to whom freedom had been denied hoped to find in the New World what had been refused them in the Old—dignity of the individual and the right to worship God as they wished. This country's significance in history and its destiny among nations are evolving from its having been the first nation ever founded on the spiritual concept of the equality of all men under God. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Through public and private channels, the United States has manifested good will and an unprecedented example of brotherhood by sending food and supplies to a large part of the world. But food and supplies are not enough. The world needs the kind of vital faith in God that drove Abraham to seek Canaan and that gave our forefathers

courage to leave a known world and risk the dangers of an unknown land for the sake of spiritual freedom. History records many instances of nations being able to surmount crises because their leaders were men with faith in God, men who relied on Him for guidance. Abraham Lincoln relied constantly on God's guidance. He is quoted as saying: "I am satisfied that when the Almighty wants me to do, or not to do, a particular thing, He finds a way of letting me know it. I am a full believer that God knows what He wants a man to do, that which pleases Him. It is never well for a man who heeds it not. I talk to God. My mind seems relieved when I do and a way is suggested."

Today's crisis is not merely a conflict between opposing political ideologies; it is a question of survival or annihilation, of life or death. We cannot rest content in our material prosperity or in self-satisfied righteousness because we are giving of our wealth to others. In gratitude for the good life that is ours we must renew and practice faith in God, the giver of all good. We must build a spiritual faith so strong that we can spread our courage and confidence to the whole world. Thus, it becomes the duty of each and every one of us to eliminate fear and build up faith.

Most of us recognize the fears that register in the conscious mind. But seldom do we know the fears that may be lurking in subconsciousness to plague and torment us. Religion recognizes the need to eliminate hidden thought patterns that may be

adversely affecting our lives and to re-educate the subconscious as well as the conscious mind. Religion uses language as a curative agent—the minister counsels with the use of spoken denials and affirmations. Religion transmutes wrong thinking into right thinking, negative emotions into positive emotions, bad habits into good habits.

For whatever reason you may have allowed fear to become a habit, you can be certain that steady prayer and right thinking will eliminate it. God power has been at work throughout the ages directing man from the darkness of savagery into intellectual and spiritual light. We have made great progress through the use of our God-given intellect. Our next step up the evolutionary ladder must be along moral and spiritual lines. Our first objective must be the development of a faith that will serve as an ever-present armor against fear. "Withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one."

If fear is either a conscious or unconscious habit, you can be rid of it by affirming: *I have perfect faith in God. I know that His love infolds me, His power protects me, His presence watches over me. I place my life and all my affairs lovingly in His hands.*

You can be helped in prayer and meditation by studying these beautiful words that are taken from the Bible:

"He shall call upon me, and I will answer him;
"I will be with him in trouble:
I will deliver him, and honor him."

"Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want."

"Jehovah is my light and my salvation."

"Be not afraid because of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Jehovah."

"For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline."

"Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee."

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear."

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

CHAPTER V

Envy

A CHARMING YOUNG FRIEND of mine asked me to help serve at a birthday party for Louise, her nine-year-old daughter. An incident occurred at that party which impressed me greatly because it demonstrated two ways of overcoming envy in children. One little guest brought a particularly beautiful doll of her own to play with, to the envy of all the other girls. When the birthday child said she wished she had that doll, her mother answered quietly: "Stop and think, Louise. If you had it, Helen wouldn't have it, and look how unhappy that would make her."

Louise nodded. "That's so, Mummy, I didn't think of that." And she ran off happily to play with her own toys.

Another child tried to grab the doll and screamed: "Let me have it, I want it, I want it." Her mother took her in her arms and petted her. "Don't cry darling," she said, "Santa Claus will bring you one just like it."

Most children want what they see. If one watches a group of children at play, he notices that each child struggles for the toy with which another child is playing. Almost from the time children can talk, they express a desire for something owned by a brother, sister, or playmate.

The unwise mother, under the delusion that she must keep her offspring content at all costs, gives in to the desire. The wise mother tries to keep her child happy by directing his attention to something he already owns; or, as in the case of my young friend, by explaining that the other person would be unhappy if he were deprived of the object of envy. If a child is old enough, he can be taught that envy is a fault that brings nothing but discontent and unhappiness. He can be taught that if he trusts in God and prays to Him he will never want for any good thing. Such training in early years determines whether a child grows up to be content with what he has or whether he allows envy of others to cast a shadow over his life.

Envy and jealousy are often used synonymously, but they may also be used to mean various things. We may be jealous of what is our own; we may be envious of what is another's. A jealous person may fear to lose what he has; an envious person may be miserable when he sees another has something that he does not have.

Because envy is born in the mind, students of Truth who learn to control their thinking can, by regular spiritual work, eradicate the fault. Paul said: "Love envieth not." In his essay "Compensation," Ralph Waldo Emerson says that compensation for inequalities of outer conditions lies in the nature of the soul; that if we look at the facts closely inequalities will vanish. "Love reduces them as the sun melts the icebergs in the sea. . . . If I feel overshadowed

and outdone by great neighbors, I can yet love." This feeling of being overshadowed by the superior accomplishments of neighbors and a feeling of necessity for "keeping up with the Joneses" are common forms of envy. Envy may imply a desire for the advantages, possessions, and position held by a friend or neighbor. If the Jones family gets a new car, a neighbor may be so envious that before long he buys one equally good or better, even though he may have to go into debt for it. If the daughter of the Jones' home appears in a new suit, the neighbor's wife feels compelled to buy their daughter a new suit. The list of things enjoyed by the Joneses or the advantages they have could be expanded to include household appliances, educational opportunities for the children, social position, and all sorts of other benefits that may evoke envy.

A woman acquaintance of mine suffers from envy. She cannot see another woman wear something new without wanting a similar one for herself. Because she becomes discontented if she cannot buy what her friends and acquaintances have, she has made her own life and that of her family miserable. Her husband does the best he can to supply her wants and often works overtime so that he can give her more money. But her desire for things is a bottomless pit.

Her mother-in-law recently said to me: "Ella's envious nature is making my son old before his time, and I can't do a thing about it. If I were to say anything to him, he would come to her defense at once.

And of course I can't say anything to her. I'd only be called an interfering mother-in-law. It wouldn't do any good anyway. The fault of envy is too deeply rooted in her character."

Because they are not close friends and have never spoken to me about their religious beliefs, I could not say things I would like to have said. But I thought of Emerson's words and realized their truth. If there is love in our hearts, the distinction between *his* and *mine* vanishes. We are all children of the same God. If we truly love our neighbor, we cannot be envious of him. We rejoice in his blessings, even if they seem to be greater than our own. If we love God and are thankful to Him for every benefit He gives us, we will never become discontented by comparing our lot with that of other persons.

Nothing will blot out envy more quickly than an attitude of thankfulness. Our replacing the constricting, pain-creating thought of envy with the expansive, joy-creating thought of gratitude will change discontent to content and misery to happiness. The thankful spirit is a happy spirit. Constant recognition of the abundance of God's good always available to us will keep us satisfied with what we have and will free us from envy of what others have.

So often does the Psalmist praise God that we know he had the habit of thanksgiving.

"I will sing unto Jehovah,

Because he hath dealt bountifully with me."

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto Jehovah,
And to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High."

"Praise ye Jehovah.

Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good;
For his lovingkindness *endureth* for ever."

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,

And into his courts with praise:

Give thanks unto him, and bless his name."

These are but a few of the many verses from the Psalms that praise and thank the Lord. The Psalmist knew, as we must learn, that one constantly grateful to God for blessings received can never feel discontent or dissatisfaction.

Gratitude is a quality that blesses both its giver and its receiver. The many commands throughout the Bible to rejoice and give thanks to the Lord show the importance its wise authors placed on gratitude. Paul says in the Epistle to the Colossians: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts . . . and be ye thankful." In Ephesians he says: "Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father." If we remember to give thanks for everything that is ours to enjoy—the beauty of the day, a flower, a book, a friend, music, a loving family, all the things we see and touch and hear—we are lifted up in consciousness to a height where neither envy nor any other negative thought can reach.

A short story, "The Necklace," by the French writer de Maupassant, illustrates the tragedy that can result from the sin of envy. Mathilde Loisel, a beautiful young matron, is endlessly discontented with her own poor surroundings and envious of

those who are rich. Borrowing a diamond necklace from a rich friend to wear to a ball, she loses it and her husband has to go heavily into debt to replace it. It takes ten years of scrimping and drudgery to pay off the debt. And by that time Mathilde is an old hag, hard and coarse. The ironic twist at the end of the story that the borrowed necklace was an imitation of paste, points to the moral that material possessions are not worth the struggle human beings may endure to achieve them.

The tenth commandment states: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." Covetousness, then, is the inordinate desire for something belonging to another. It breaks one of God's commandments, given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and is therefore a sin. Since envy may induce covetousness, it approximates sin.

Both the Old and New Testament warn against envy and covetousness and place them with malice, hatred, and other elemental traits as sins to be avoided. In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul describes practices that are "hateful to God," which include "all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness . . . envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity." The prophets and Jesus also preached strongly against covetousness as a backsliding from the path of spirituality. Jeremiah, foretelling the destruction of Babylon, warned: "O thou that dwellest

upon many waters; abundant in treasures, thine end is come, the measure of thy covetousness." When one of the multitude asked Jesus to bid his brother share his inheritance with him, Jesus answered: "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth."

He who truly desires to live a spiritual life tries not to envy anyone or to covet his possessions, for he knows in his heart that God provides abundantly for all His children. Yet there are times when even the most spiritual of persons may feel envy and find it difficult to eliminate. Like other faults that are not pleasing to God, envy results from keeping the eyes too much on human and material values instead of on things of the Spirit.

We allow ourselves to forget that God never turns away from us, that He always keeps His promises of love and life and abundance. But in our quest for human benefits and material goods, we too often turn away from God. We forget the truth that Jesus taught: "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Jesus warned against giving too much attention to clothes or food or drink. He said that our Father knows we have need of these things, and it is His good pleasure to give us the kingdom. He also warned against piling up treasures on earth, because we are prone to center our hearts where our treasures are.

When we harbor envy of another's good, whether it be his superior possessions, advantages, success, or mental endowments, we lack faith in God's promises of good. Envy clogs the channel between our minds and the perfect mind of God so that we cannot receive His good.

What someone else possesses is no business of ours. Our business is to live as God would have us live, to use the power He has given us to improve ourselves in His sight, to strengthen and develop our own indwelling Christ by seeking first and always the kingdom of God. As we mature spiritually our faults will disappear, and we will experience the greatest good of all—awareness that God is right here in the midst of us and that His Spirit gives us power not only to overcome faults but to manifest their opposite, good.

When we try to overcome faults through use of our own will power, we are apt to feel strained and tense. Once we admit to ourselves that we have a fault or bad habit we should not say, "I'll get rid of it. I can fight this out myself." Rather, we should forget the fault and turn to God with full realization that the human will is weak, vacillating, and limited in power whereas God's will for us is strong, steady, and limitless. The human mind is fallible, full of doubts and conflicts. Divine Mind is infallible, sure, and serene. Our task is to give up our vain human striving, our inclination to rely solely on our own will, and to remember every moment that the presence and power of God are always available for our

use. But we must have faith and constantly acknowledge God. "I acknowledge Thy presence and power, O blessed Spirit; in Thy divine wisdom now erase my mortal limitations, and from Thy pure substance of love bring into manifestation my world, according to Thy perfect law." This invocation, this realization of the wisdom and love of God will open the channel between us and Him and let His Spirit have its perfect way with us. But we must acknowledge and call on Him.

"He shall call upon me, and I will answer him . . .

I will deliver him, and honor him."

If we are honest with ourselves and admit the fault of envy, if we have been discontented and unhappy because of it, we can eliminate the fault and achieve contentment by turning to God for help. The help will surely come. We will feel calm and at peace as His Spirit flows into us. We will be so thankful for all the good that is ours that we will wonder how we could ever have envied the good of someone else.

If we truly trust and love God, we will want to make ourselves over in His image and likeness. Jesus said that He would leave His peace with us—that glorious infinite peace that transcends understanding. An envious mind knows no peace, for envy stirs up the mind as a storm stirs up the sea. In Proverbs we find:

"A tranquil heart is the life of the flesh;
But envy is the rottenness of the bones."

If you have been guilty of being envious, you

must seek with God's help to cleanse yourself, for your own peace of mind and the peace of those whose lives touch yours. By constant prayer, you can lift yourself out of human limitations. With God's help, you can change yourself into a person that is pleasing in His sight. When you realize the temporal value of material goods, you will see that the only values worth striving for are those of the Spirit. Jesus said: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

You can rid yourself of envy by affirming: I am innocent of the fault of envy, for I know that God can and will provide everything I desire or need. I have faith in the power of God to make me perfect in all ways, and from Him I gain strength to overcome every weakness. I am still and know that God within me is helping me to eliminate my human desire for earthly treasures, lifting my consciousness to His kingdom where I behold the treasures of heaven. I am full of gratitude and praise for His wise guidance and infinite love.

You can be helped in the work of overcoming envy by meditating on these beautiful words from the Bible:

"My soul, wait thou in silence for God only;

For my expectation is from him."

"My God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory."

"Thou openest thy hand,

And satisfiest the desire of every living thing."

"But godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out."

"Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee."

"For he satisfieth the longing soul,
And the hungry soul he filleth with good."

"Love suffereth long, *and* is kind; love envieth not."

"He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that seek after him."

"Let us choose for us that which is right:
Let us know among ourselves what is good."

"For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content."

CHAPTER VI

Tension

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SOME YEARS BEFORE World War II when I was working at a motion-picture studio in London, I had an appointment with my literary agent. "Come any time after lunch," he had said.

I reached his office at 4 o'clock. The outer reception room was empty. After waiting a few moments, I knocked on a door to attract attention. An office boy appeared with a cup of tea in one hand and a slice of bread in the other. He seemed quite indifferent to my presence.

"I have an appointment with Mr. Brown," I said.

"You can't see him just now—it's teatime."

"How long will I have to wait?" I asked.

"About half an hour—he has just started."

While I sat impatiently waiting for my agent to have his tea, I compared this leisurely way of doing things with the speedy American way. I could not picture an American office where everyone from head executive to office boy took time off in the middle of a busy afternoon to have tea.

Later, in the inner office when I mentioned my observation to Mr. Brown, he said in reply: "Stopping for afternoon tea is a good habit—better than your American way of hurry, hurry, hurry all day long. Aside from the stimulation of the tea itself, a

little pause in the day's activities rests the nerves and refreshes the spirit. One reason you Americans are so tense and nervous is that you do not appreciate the value of rest periods."

I have often thought that perhaps he is right. One of our most common transgressions is our tendency to rush as though we are always catching a train. We simply fail to recognize the need for short periods of rest and quiet. The beginning of any kind of spiritual growth is in stillness, because it is in the stillness that we commune with God and feel His presence within us. Serenity is the primary requisite for meditation and prayer. In order to hear the "still small voice" we have to shut out the tumult of the senses and the pressure of external affairs. To feel the peace of Spirit, we have to relax and let go of peace-disturbing thoughts and emotions. Yet many of us continue to behave like squirrels whirling round and round in a cage without purpose or direction. We hurry and scurry, working against time as though we have not a moment to lose. The result is a state of tension that has earned for Americans the reputation of being the most nervous people in the world.

A friend of mine who is deeply religious said to me recently: "I don't know what's the matter with me. I've got the jitters so bad that I can't seem to make contact with God or keep poised and serene as I used to. I've tried and tried to figure out how I've erred, but the more I think about myself the worse my problem seems to get."

As she went on talking, I realized that without her being aware of it she was being affected by the fears that prevail in the outer world. Because of the state of her nerves, which in reality was the state of her mind, she had lost that tranquillity of spirit which is essential for spiritual realization. Instead of letting go and trusting God for serenity, she was struggling desperately to find an explanation for her state of mind, and the more she struggled the more tense she became.

"You've been straining too hard," I said. "Try to let go and stop thinking about yourself altogether. You believe in God and His power. Why not give Him a chance to act? If you can just let go and realize that the battle is not yours but God's, you will soon be at peace again." I quoted the familiar words of the 46th Psalm, which have helped many persons to achieve peace of mind: "Be still, and know that I am God."

After my friend left, I began to think of that state of nervousness often called the "jitters" and I came to the conclusion that these sporadic attacks often affect even those who try conscientiously to live a spiritual life. Just now in this stormy period of history, we have a greater need than ever to develop the habit of calm thinking and calm behavior.

The nervous system of the body has been compared to the telephone system. The mind, like a telephone operator, receives a stream of messages from a network of sensory nerves, analogous to telephone wires. Another network of motor nerves carries out

commands from the mind to regulate the body mechanism in appropriate ways. The whole nervous system is communication equipment that holds the body together for unified action, with the mind as the controlling center. Therefore, when there is lack of control or any form of nervous unrest, the impulses sent along the nerve fibers produce bodily conditions such as a fluttery stomach, unsteady hands, accelerated pulse. If we wish to develop calmness and poise so that they become a habit, we must keep control of the mind, the body "central."

Let us see in what ways we have let ourselves get out of control. First, there is the habit of hurry. Rushing around for any purpose is a waste of energy and a transgression of the law of harmony. That the rhythm of nature is even and regular is exemplified by the ebb and flow of tides, the change of seasons, the movement of stars in their courses, the beat of the human heart. Nature can never be forced or rushed—and nature is of God. Thus, whenever we rush, we are out of tune with God and out of step with the orderly rhythmic movement of His universe.

If we desire poise and spiritual contentment, we must learn to stop our futile rushing around. We can replace driving ourselves furiously with the habit of consistently thinking, speaking, and acting in a quiet orderly way. We can organize and systematize our activities so that we need never feel pressed for time but know that "for everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven." We must be masters, not slaves, of time.

Hurrying has always been one of my bad habits. But whenever the temptation to rush comes upon me, I try to stop myself by thinking: "What's your rush? God does not hurry. Be still." I deliberately moderate my tempo by saying to myself that there is no sense of hurry in me, no feeling of rush or confusion. I take a few deep, even breaths and declare that I am quiet and calm and relaxed, that I am poised in the perfect peace of God.

Jesus rebuked the wind and said to the sea: "Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." Through prayer we can attain the calm and poise that overcomes the tendency to rush. After a short time we shall be able to reduce our speed immediately by the short command to ourselves: "Peace, be still." As we conquer the hurry habit, we shall learn that we accomplish much more by "taking it easy" than we ever did by rushing. We can demonstrate the truth stated by Isaiah: "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." A task assumed calmly and unhurriedly can be accomplished with greater ease and efficiency than when it is attacked nervously and in haste.

Another common habit that is a cause of nervousness is the tendency to allow our attention to flit from one thing to another, instead of centering it on a single objective. At meals, for example, instead of eating quietly and contentedly, we are apt to be thinking of all the things we have to do. Unconsciously we rush through the meal—and then we wonder why we have indigestion!

How often we hear someone say, "I have to grab a quick bite of lunch!" The many drugstores, cafes, and short-order lunch stands that serve food at counters, with the patrons sitting on backless, uncomfortable stools, testify to our habit of eating and running. When Europeans first come to this country, they are shocked by our "quick-lunch" habit. In every foreign country I have visited, I have found that luncheon is a meal enjoyed quietly for at least an hour, in pleasant company, without talk of business affairs. The discussion of business often leads to irritation, anxiety, or anger; and any mental or emotional disturbance reacts on the nerves of the stomach, causing digestive disorder. We should never eat when we are nervous or upset, because we shall not be able to digest our food properly. The reaction of mental agitation on the stomach nerves is immediate. It ranges from a "butterfly" stomach, that insistent vibration in the pit of the stomach, to acute nausea and vomiting.

The custom of saying grace before meals—a thank-you to God for the food He provides—creates a serene mood with which to begin a meal. Eating slowly and calmly with appreciation of the quality and abundance of our supply, with gratitude to the great Provider and with a feeling of good will toward those who sit with us at the table would help erase what many suffer from—nervous indigestion.

From our reading and study of religious subjects and from the words of sages and mystics we know that concentration on God is one of the most

important steps in effectual prayer. If we long and pray for peace of mind in our daily living, we must develop the habit of centering our attention firmly on each task we assume. We must learn to draw all our mental energy to one focus and to develop the habit of thinking and doing only one thing at a time.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." The single eye means concentrated attention. We have power to direct our attention where we want it. Whatever we allow to stay in our minds regularly, whatever we focus our attention on constantly controls our lives. If we center our thoughts on the accomplishment of a particular purpose, we usually succeed in achieving that purpose. If, on the contrary, our thinking is diffused and our attention is allowed to roam from one thing to another, we rarely accomplish that which we set out to do.

We can help ourselves acquire the habit of concentration by continuous practice in centering our minds on one thing at a time and by ejecting thoughts of anything that does not bear directly on the subject.

Another bad habit that results in lack of tranquillity is talking too much. We fritter away an enormous amount of time and energy on aimless chatter and vain repetitions. Yet wise men of all times have recognized the value of silence and the danger of too much speech.

Most religions teach the wisdom and the power

of silence—of learning to control the tongue. The prophet Jeremiah said, "Jehovah our God hath put us to silence." In Proverbs we find:

"Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue
Keepeth his soul from troubles."

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

If we wish to develop spiritually, we must learn to control our minds so that we may speak or be silent as we wish. We must break the habit of wasting energy and time on fruitless conversation. We must realize that words have directive power in themselves and should be chosen with care, not uttered at random. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Job said, "How forcible are words of uprightness."

Since idle chatter is productive of nothing but confusion and noise, we should never indulge in it. If we are in a social group where the talk is incessant and pointless, where everyone tries to outdo the others in expressing insignificant opinions, we can, without seeming rude, retreat within ourselves and keep spiritually poised by maintaining silence.

As a first step toward the achievement of spiritual tranquillity, the habit of physical relaxation is excellent. It is the "Be still" command. To achieve a habitual state of mental serenity, however, affirmations of calm should accompany physical resting.

Faithful, determined practice of calmness will

bring a surprising and gratifying change in your whole manner of living. You will find that your digestion is better, that you no longer have a butterfly stomach, and that your entire physical condition is vastly improved. Your thinking will be clearer and more direct, your conversation more accurate and interesting. You will be able to accomplish better and more work in less time. And from a more comprehensive point of view you will realize that your own tranquillity is contributing to the peace of the world around you.

If you are one of those who have the hurry habit—eating too fast, talking too much, rushing around for no particular purpose or need—or if your body is jittery or tense, you can achieve serenity if you are willing to make the effort to discipline yourself steadily and faithfully. When you find yourself rushing about or in a hurry, stop whatever you are doing, no matter where you happen to be and give yourself the order: "Peace, be still."

Set aside a certain time each day for complete relaxation; check every muscle from the top of your head to the tips of your toes to make certain that there is no tightening or strain. If you feel any strain, give the command: "Let go." When you are absolutely sure that all muscular kinks are ironed out, affirm: *I am quiet and calm and relaxed. I am one with God, and God is infinite calm, infinite peace. I am surrounded by the perfect peace of God, the peace that passes all understanding. Divine order is now established in my mind, body, and affairs.*

Use the following appropriate words from the Bible for meditation and prayer:

"Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still."

"Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: Thereby good shall come unto thee."

"Peace be unto thee, and peace be to thy house, and peace be unto all that thou hast."

"Thus saith Jehovah, Set thy house in order."

"Let all things be done decently and in order."

"He maketh the storm a calm,

So that the waves thereof are still.

Then are they glad because they are quiet;

So he bringeth them unto their desired haven."

"Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest."

CHAPTER VII

Faultfinding

A WOMAN WHOM I knew only slightly telephoned me one day to ask whether she could see me immediately. Her voice trembled as she said, "I'm in serious trouble and I hope you will help me." I told her to come to my house, that I would see her at once.

Jane was young, slender, and beautiful and married to a professor of science, whom I had known for some time. Although he had inherited a comfortable fortune from his father, they lived simply in a modest house not far from the college where he taught.

When Jane arrived at my home she looked unhappy and rebellious. Her first remark was, "I'm going to get a divorce from Tom; I can't stand his faultfinding any longer!"

Over tea I listened to her story. "You know Tom," she started. "You know how sharply critical he is of everything and everybody. When he meets people or goes to a play or reads a book, he never sees what is good about it but immediately begins to pick out the flaws. His approach to everything is negative. If I express a different point of view, he acts as though I were some sort of moron. He is irritable with the children and constantly finds fault with me. I've tried and tried to handle it. Now I'm

tired of trying. I'm fed up with living in an atmosphere of disapproval and criticism and I'm going to get a divorce!"

I knew that she had not made up her mind definitely on a divorce, or she would have gone to a lawyer instead of coming to me. "Have you thought what a divorce would mean to the children?" I asked.

"That's what has kept me with him this long."

"You still love him, don't you?"

She suddenly started to weep, and it was a few seconds before she could answer. "Yes, I do. The ironical part of the whole situation is that he loves me and the children deeply—I know that. We are all he really cares about in the world."

I remembered having been told that at one time Jane was deeply religious, but Tom had ridiculed her for her "childish thinking" and tried to prove to her scientifically that there is no God. He had a rationalistic attitude toward life and refused to believe anything that could not be proved mathematically. His scientific demand for literal truth made him overly critical of normal human imperfections.

At Jane's request I agreed to talk with Tom, although I am always hesitant about interfering in the lives of others. After carefully thinking over their problem, I concluded that if the spiritual sustenance of her religion had not been withheld from Jane, she would have been able to bear Tom's fault-finding without feeling so much irritation. I decided

on my line of approach. Before Tom came I reread an article in which six noted scientists set forth their beliefs in an ultimate power behind the physical universe—the practice of scientific methods, they feel, does not preclude a spiritual interpretation of the values of life. I sensed that the opinion of these men would have more weight with Tom than anything I could say.

Shortly after Tom arrived, I gave him this article to read. I could see that he was impressed. After generalizing about science and life and about the tendency of certain other scientists to carry critical analysis so far that it colors all their thinking, I broached the specific issue of his relationship with his wife and children and his intolerance toward Jane's religious beliefs.

"I never could regard religion as anything but a prop for the weak and I hate to see my wife act so childishly."

"Don't you think we should allow others freedom to think and believe and act in the way that seems right to them, even though we may not agree?"

He hesitated. "I hadn't exactly thought of it in that way."

I stressed the need for us to be tolerant toward the beliefs of others and to refrain from adverse criticism of a point of view that differs from our own, whether in ordinary affairs of daily life or in religion. I added that no matter what our own religious beliefs are or even if we have no belief in God, still

we have no right to deny others the inspiration they get from their faith.

When Tom left he was in deep thought. A few days later, Jane telephoned that she and Tom had had a heart-to-heart talk. She had told him quite frankly that she had reached the end of her endurance and that she could not stand any longer his constant nagging disapproval of her and the children or his defeatist attitude toward personal and world affairs. She said he admitted that he had been overly critical and promised to try to overcome this fault. "And he is trying!" she said. "It may take time before he breaks the habit completely, because he has been critical for so long. But he is kinder and more considerate to me and the children already. I really believe that now we can work things out so that our marriage will last; and I hope and pray that he will gain happiness by learning to approve instead of always finding fault."

It has been several months since I received this telephone call, but I have seen Jane and her husband and know that their life together is happier. Tom no longer ridicules her religious activities. She was radiant as she told me about the change. She added, "I pray every night that Tom will see the light of Truth and I have faith that he will."

Look among your own friends and acquaintances. Is there a person about whom you can truthfully say, "He never speaks ill of anyone?" During a long professional career in which I have met all kinds of people, I do not believe I have known anyone who

has not at one time or another indulged in disapproving comment upon personalities or principles. Sometimes the criticism is malicious; more often it is casual faultfinding, a tendency to belittle another person's beliefs and actions.

Why is it so many of us fail to control the habit of criticizing? Can it be that carping at another's seeming weakness gives us a feeling of strength? Do we feel that we are bolstering our own ego by assuming an attitude of superiority over someone else? Whatever the reason or the degree of criticism, it is a transgression of the commandment "Love one another" and acts as a stumbling stone on the path to spiritual maturity.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus states that tolerance of the faults of others is necessary preparation for prayer. "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire. . . . first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." He also preaches against the habit of passing judgment on others and adds that the judgment we receive is relative and equivalent to the judgment we give. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you."

He warns us against finding fault in others when we ourselves are imperfect. "Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

In the story of the woman taken in adultery Jesus gives us in one sentence a principle that should serve as a constant reminder to us not to censure others: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." When the Pharisees and scribes left, convicted by their own conscience, Jesus said to the woman, "Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way; from henceforth sin no more." And to the Pharisees He said: "Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. Yea and if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me."

Negative criticism has a wide range of activity—from mild disapproval to violent condemnation. In the Biblical passages quoted above we find not only the statement of the sin but the surest way to correct it.

The first step is to examine ourselves for the "beam" that may be in our own eye. Are we entirely free from the fault of which we accuse our brother? Are we casting a stone without sin? Turning the critical eye away from the other person toward ourselves is likely to reveal things that will cause us to say, "What right have I who am so imperfect to pass judgment on the imperfections of another?"

None of us likes to be the object of criticism. So if we find ourselves about to peck at the faults of a friend or acquaintance, let us imagine at once that we are the talked-about instead of the talker. Let us remember the Golden Rule: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law

and the prophets." Reversing a situation and putting ourselves in the other person's place frequently keeps us from uttering a careless, disparaging comment.

Also we are inclined to judge by what we see on the outside—the appearance and manners of the external man. Like the Pharisees, we "judge after the flesh" instead of looking beyond the appearance to the Spirit of God within. If we wish to advance spiritually, we must not judge according to the appearance but according to the perfect Godlike spirit beyond the appearance. God created all men, and His Spirit is in those who appear evil as well as in those who appear good.

Suppose, for example, that we know a woman who likes to collect and spread bits of personal news. Should her name be mentioned, we might say, "She's a terrible gossip." According to appearances, we would not be telling an untruth. But let us stop a moment to think further. Do we always refrain from gossiping? Do we ever repeat idle rumors? And what about the other character traits of the person we have labeled as a gossip? Isn't there something good we can find to say about her?

Judging by appearances is directly contrary to the teachings of both the Old and New Testament. In the 16th chapter of I Samuel, we are told that the Lord said to Samuel, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature . . . for Jehovah *seeth* not as man *seeth*; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart." If we wish to follow the way of Jesus, we shall say as

He did, "Neither do I condemn thee." And we shall think of the perfect Spirit that dwells within the other person and say to ourselves that no matter what he may seem to be on the outside, we know that within him as within all of us, dwells the perfection of the Christ.

Such thinking will not only cleanse negation from our own consciousness but may well be the means of changing the attitude of the other person. I once had occasion to visit a lawyer on a matter of vital importance to me. When I was admitted to his office he did not look up from his desk or ask me to sit down. He was so coldly impersonal, so obviously irritated by the interruption of my coming that I felt numb and powerless. He is a machine, I thought, as hard and inanimate as the furniture in this room. I cannot possibly tell him my problem. Then in a sudden flash I remembered the words of Jesus, "Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

Quickly denying my first judgment, I said silently: "He is not so hard and stern as he looks. He is just overworked and he gives a false impression. I know that the real man within is kind and friendly. I salute the Christ in him."

Suddenly he looked up from his papers and smiled in a way that changed his whole countenance. "Excuse my rudeness in not asking you to sit down," he said; "I'm so rushed just now that half the time I'm not conscious of anything but the case under my nose. Now suppose you tell me what's the trouble."

He was sympathetic, and I found it very easy to talk to him and tell him my story.

Since that day I have tried to follow the principle of nonresistance to the appearance of evil, of turning the other cheek, which to me means turning my mind away from what seems wrong on the outside to the perfection of the Spirit of God within. And invariably it works!

One of the prices the modern world is paying for its scientific knowledge is an attitude of skepticism toward that which cannot be apprehended by the senses or interpreted by the intellect. Students of spiritual Truth have traveled beyond this Pyrrhonic philosophy. They believe that the evidence of things not seen is often more reliable than the evidence of the senses. We accept and use the power of the X ray, although it vibrates at too high an intensity and too fine a wave length for our eyes to see. Similarly, radio and television have shown that sound and pictures can be transmitted and that the human ear and eye alone cannot pick them up. Today, skeptics deny the possibility of spiritual healing. But someday what religionists accept on faith will be proved scientifically—that a vibration of high intensity and very fine wave length initiated by a spiritual force in the human mind has power to heal the body. And like the invisible ultraviolet and infrared rays, this spiritual ray will be universally accepted and used for therapeutic purposes.

In the world of natural science what is accepted as true one day is often changed or proved untrue the

next as new experiments widen the field of knowledge. The scientific method of honest analysis, if transferred to the world of human nature, can be made to work for the general good. But if analysis leads to chronic negativism, as in Tom's case, the result is sure to be unhappiness for the faultfinder and for those whose lives touch his.

I do not mean to imply that we must never criticize or express disapproval. But we have to be absolutely certain that the opinion we express has been reached after careful study and that our voicing it serves some good purpose. Honest appraisal of an ideology, of works of art, of politics, of religion, even of persons—if made in a spirit of truth seeking and tolerance—will help unveil the truth. We must be sure, though, that our motive in expressing an opinion springs from a desire to bring the truth to light and not from a desire for self-glorification.

Mind searching to determine your motives will reveal whether you are a truth seeker or a faultfinder. If you discover that your criticism, whether arising from thoughtlessness, from an unconscious need to prove your superiority, or from deliberate malice, has become a habit, you must try to correct the fault by steady work along spiritual lines.

If you are one of those who criticize too freely and if on recognizing the error you wish to correct it, I suggest continuous self-discipline along three lines:

1. The moment you feel tempted to cast a stone, ask yourself whether you are without sin.
2. Look beyond the appearance of imperfection

in the other person to the perfection that God sees in him.

3. Pray constantly, affirming the virtue of approval.

Affirm: I am forbearing toward all. I am appreciative of their good qualities. I help them by knowing the Truth about them—that behind the appearance of evil is God's eternal good. I recognize and salute the omnipresent Spirit of God in all men.

These words from the Bible will give you food for meditation and prayer:

"Teach me, and I will hold my peace;

And cause me to understand wherein I have erred."

"Keep thy tongue from evil,

And thy lips from speaking guile."

"Surely my lips shall not speak unrighteousness,

Neither shall my tongue utter deceit."

"Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue

Keepeth his soul from troubles."

"Set a watch, O Jehovah, before my mouth;

Keep the door of my lips."

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart,

Be acceptable in thy sight,

O Jehovah, my rock, and my redeemer."

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

CHAPTER VIII

Intolerance

AN ACQUAINTANCE of mine took me to her church. The minister is known for his broad and comprehensive interpretation of religion, and on this particular Sunday he preached a sermon on the subject of brotherliness and universal tolerance. He stressed the need for all Christians to root out any feeling of superiority toward others because of difference in religious belief, race, or color. He pointed out that we show true brotherliness to the peoples of other countries by sending them supplies. But, he added, too many of us are uncharitable, unkind, sometimes actively cruel to certain minority groups here at home. His conclusion was that when we show prejudice to any of our brothers we are breaking the commandment given in both the Old and New Testament that instructs us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

After church I took a bus home, and a tight-lipped, grim-faced woman, whom I had noticed during the service, sat next to me and started a conversation by asking how I liked the sermon. I answered that I thought it was unusually inspiring and contained a lesson badly needed at this time.

"Well, I think that minister ought to be thrown out!" she exclaimed. "The idea of his saying we should treat all people alike!"

"Didn't Jesus preach the equality of all men as children of the same Father?" I asked.

She avoided a direct answer. "Everybody knows that all men are not equal. Some of us are better than others, and no preacher ought to say we should act the same to everybody!" She then launched into a diatribe against certain peoples, which for sheer viciousness and perversion of truth might have originated in some fanatical propaganda bureau.

I tried to get in a word of protest. But nothing I said prevailed against her fierce bigotry.

When I arrived home I considered, as I had on many previous occasions, the incongruity of persons calling themselves Christians and yet failing to practice the basic tenet of the Christ teaching. I pondered the indisputable fact that religious fanaticism so often motivates spiritual self-righteousness and bigotry.

All religions teach love of neighbor and justice toward him. In Leviticus we find: "In righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor . . . Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am Jehovah." In the New Testament Jesus teaches that love of neighbor is second only to love of God. When He asked a certain lawyer how he interpreted the law the lawyer answered by quoting the commandments "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Jesus said,

"Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

The spirit of brotherliness, the belief that all men are equal in God's sight, has never in all history been more needed than today. Through the help of science geographical barriers between nations have been removed, and modern transportation facilities have brought them closer together. Radio, television, and motion pictures record news from all parts of the world at the moment the news is being made. No longer can nations be isolated units. The world has become so small that all its peoples are neighbors, each aware of the thought and accomplishments of the others. But two world wars in one generation and the present international tension are proof of how far we are from spiritual unity. Leaders with vision have always preached the necessity for unity among men. Yet we continue to stay apart, to let nationalism, selfish trade interests, traditional religious beliefs, or personal prejudices cause us to forget that failure to love and to be tolerant toward our neighbors is a transgression of divine law.

Not long ago I heard a radio commentator speak of the effects of propaganda on the mind. He said that our intelligence service has evidence that certain subversive forces are trying to disrupt our national unity by fostering prejudice and hatred against minority groups. "Unfortunately," he concluded, "this subtle propaganda is being believed by a large number of individuals, with the result that racial and religious intolerance is on the increase."

Many persons with a high sense of fair play have thoughtlessly fallen into the habit of judging by color, creed, or race rather than by individual characteristics; of classifying as a general type what is in reality a single personality. If a neighbor or acquaintance happens to be of a certain race, he is likely to be referred to first by his race and then as a personality. Little or big faults, present only in specific persons, are generalized into racial or religious traits.

One of the great gifts that men living in democratic countries enjoy is freedom of will. We have freedom to choose our surroundings, our religion, our associates, our friends. We have the right of discrimination, so that we can be friendly with those whose thinking, tastes, and characteristics are in harmony with our own and avoid those who for one reason or another do not attract us. This is a privilege that we are right in exercising. But discrimination against members of a group, a religion, or a race as a class without consideration of individual worth is misuse of our gift of freedom and violation of spiritual law.

The word *prejudice* is defined as "a judgment or opinion formed without due examination of the facts . . . a premature opinion." Some prejudices are absorbed from tradition; others are acquired through association and environment; still others arise out of personal or national crises. Because someone's ancestor may have been cheated once by a member of a particular race, the descendants of the cheated man may for generations nurse prejudice against all mem-

bers of that race. If it is the custom in a certain community to bar members of certain races from social activity, many of the members of the community thoughtlessly observe a gentleman's agreement and fall in line by discriminating against these persons. Such attitudes are unreasonable, antisocial, and unspiritual.

When Jesus gave primary importance to the commandment to love our neighbors, He did not limit neighbor by reason of social or financial position, creed, or color. To Him neighbor included every human being and was synonymous with brother.

With those who believe in a God of love and justice, the practice of intolerance toward others of different religion is a betrayal of faith. The Lord's Prayer, repeated daily by millions of persons throughout the world, begins, as we know, with the words "Our Father." Into these two words Jesus compressed His whole beautiful message of the brotherhood of man. Not only does He present God as a beneficent Father but as the Father of all men—irrespective of class, color, creed, race, or nation. By teaching men to say "Our Father," Jesus unites them in brotherhood and equality, since children born of the same father are brothers.

Our deeply religious forefathers incorporated in both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution the ideal of equality of all men. The Declaration of Independence states that all men are created equal, with certain inviolable rights given by their Creator. The Bill of Rights, which grants religious

freedom and the right of all citizens to vote without "account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude" is further testimony to our national concept of equality. Therefore, if one person fails to recognize the rights of any other person, group, or nation, if he is intolerant even to the least of them, he is not only failing in his duty as a Christian but also as a citizen.

We know without being told whether we have indulged in unkindness or negligence or prejudice toward others merely because they are of a different color or because they go to a different church or perhaps merely because they belong to a different class of society. Most of us have our little prejudices, our preconceived ideas, which often are emotional rather than rational but which have power to create unhappiness and work injustice toward others. If we are truly seeking to live the spiritual life, we must rid ourselves of *all* prejudice.

We cannot hope for personal spiritual maturity, national unity, or world peace until we learn to live in peace with our neighbors. If we believe in the principle of good will set forth in every religion, we must prove our belief with works. We must refrain from even the slightest feeling or expression of prejudice. Expression of personal superiority because of religious belief leads to a lack of spiritual balance in the personal life. Manifestation of group superiority leads to interdenominational conflicts and to international misunderstanding, which in turn lead to war. Therefore, those of us who long for inner spir-

itual poise and for world peace should look into our hearts and analyze our minds. If we find even the slightest trace of intolerance against any individual or group, we should work for its elimination and for the cultivation of a spirit of true brotherliness. If our transgression takes the form of spiritual pride or religious bigotry, we should recall that the essence of the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount is that all are equal in God's sight. "For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust."

In the 23d chapter of Matthew, Jesus denounces the scribes and Pharisees for spiritual pride and arrogance and warns the multitude not to be like them: "But be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your teacher; and all ye are brethren."

Peter points out that "God is no respecter of persons." In Galatians Paul says: "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye are all one *man* in Christ Jesus." In Ephesians he says: "One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." And in The Acts we find: "God that made the world and all things therein . . . made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth."

If you profess to be a disciple of Jesus yet remain intolerant or superior or arrogant toward members of another race, religion, or nation because they happen to be different from you, you are like the scribes and Pharisees whom Jesus called hypocrites because

they paid Him lip service but failed to follow His commandments. In John, we find that Jesus says: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." "If a man love me, he will keep my word."

If you truly believe in the teachings of Jesus and fail to live up to them, you are committing a sin against Him and against yourself. If you recognize that you lack a spirit of brotherliness and have fallen into the habit of unjust prejudice or bigotry and if you sincerely wish to break the habit, you can succeed by steady spiritual effort. Remember that in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught that we must not only love those who love us, not only salute our brethren, but must love and pray for our enemies. We must agree quickly with our adversaries. We can rid ourselves of racial or religious intolerance and become perfect in brotherly love only by constant spiritual exercise.

In trying to rid yourself of any negative thought habit you must be careful not to fight it by personal will power. When you grit your teeth and say, "I will *not* be prejudiced or unkind; I will *not* give in to this unfounded dislike," you are likely to become upset and nervous and thus defeat the very thing you are trying to accomplish. Use quiet, strong affirmations of tolerance and brotherliness to help eradicate the bad habit and build up the good.

Affirm an understanding of the equality of all men under God: *God, who is above all and in all, is the Father of all. I know that "in my Father's*

house are many mansions' and that His Truth resides in all of them. I am tolerant and brotherly toward every person, because that is the way God wants me to be. I open my heart to all God's children, because I know they are all equal in His sight.

In praying, it is well to remember that Jesus answered the question "Who are my brethren" by saying, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." In other words, He was stating that godliness, the doing of God's will, should be the only criterion for judging our brothers. Any other standard is presumptuous and a sin against the Lord.

The Psalms contain many verses helpful for meditation and prayer:

"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*;
Let them not have dominion over me:

Then shall I be upright,

And I shall be clear from great transgression."

"My steps have held fast to thy paths,
My feet have not slipped."

"Make me to go in the path of thy commandments;
For therein do I delight."

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!"

From other books of the Bible we can also find key thoughts for meditation:

"Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and
thee . . . for we are brethren."

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore
is the fulfillment of the law."

"Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in
the bond of peace. . . .

There is one body, and one Spirit . . .

one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all."

CHAPTER IX

Selfishness

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WHILE I WAS taking a walk late one afternoon and absorbing peace from a beautiful sunset over the sea, I met an acquaintance—and her mood was far from peaceful. She had been visiting a friend whose whole family was upset over the determination of a young daughter to go to India and study under a Hindu master. I knew the girl—gay, intelligent, filled with the joy of life—and I could not picture her as a religious recluse. “She likes you,” said the woman. “If you get a chance, I wish you’d talk to her.”

That night I read a chapter from the Bible and two magazine articles that expressed the same thought—that practice of Christian ideals by individuals all over the world is the only possible way by which the world can be saved from annihilation.

One article discussed the destructive power of the atomic bomb and its potentialities for ending our civilization and went on to say: “We have another power, greater and stronger than nuclear energy or the atomic bomb . . . the spiritual power as revealed to the world by Jesus Christ. . . . The greater power of Christ’s spirit must be released, and it must spread until it controls all men and all lands.”

The other article I read, was a plea for men and women to test Biblical propositions with the same

patience, willingness, and open-mindedness that scientists display in testing a hypothesis concerning the universe. In spite of all our material assets, the author said, we are spiritually undernourished. The challenge of today is a challenge to spiritual research, and the condition of the world should be a call to daring persons to take up the work of spreading the Truth of Christ.

These thoughts were in my mind the next afternoon when I went for my walk. A gay hello from behind me brought me out of my reverie. It was the girl who wanted to go to India. She had just come from the beach, and her tanned skin, wind-blown hair, and sparkling sea-blue eyes radiated vitality. As she walked along beside me, I asked about her plans and discovered that she had the idea that if she devoted herself to a religious life she would be serving God and attaining her own salvation.

Suddenly I realized that the material in the two articles I had read was just what I needed to try to arouse in her a sense of responsibility toward the world. I hoped to awaken in her the realization that her active mind and sincere spiritual aspirations could be put to use not only for her own salvation but for the salvation of others.

I gave her the substance of my night's reading and the conclusion to which I had come—that those of us who have spiritual awareness and strive toward spiritual maturity for ourselves dare not in this time of world crisis forget our duty to others.

I reminded her that the core of the Christ teach-

ing is that we must love our neighbor as ourself. I pointed out that Paul places love even above faith. I stressed I Cor. 13:5, which says, "Love . . . seeketh not its own." To me this means that we are not to be selfish in the acquisition of things for our own pleasure or in the securing of spiritual balance for ourselves but that we are to give of ourselves in service to others. Over and over Jesus stressed the need for giving and serving. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

I told her that if we truly have the desire to serve God, we must begin by learning to love and to serve others. And we cannot serve others if we shut ourselves off from the world. We can fulfill the commandment to love our neighbor only if we are in contact with our neighbor.

The girl was impressed by the truth of these ideas. She admitted that she had been selfish and inconsiderate to her family in refusing to listen to their advice and counsel concerning her plans. Her father had promised her that if she went through college and still had the desire to go to India he would withdraw his objections.

A week later, she came to see me. She said that she had decided to go to college and to take courses that would prepare her for the teaching profession. "I love children and I believe the best way I can serve God is by passing on to them the Truth I know. I realize now that merely seeking my own salvation would be a sin—the sin of selfishness."

It seems to me that the sin of selfishness is one

that most of us commit in one way or another. Unselfishness manifested by material, mental, and spiritual giving is a rare virtue. Yet we can never hope for peace on earth until we learn to share with others our time and our goods and our spiritual knowledge. It is fine to develop our own spiritual nature, but it is far finer to spread our realization of Truth to others by the contagion of our own spiritual way of living and by speaking words of Truth when opportunity arises.

To do this, we cannot isolate ourselves. When Jesus said, "Follow me," He meant for those who believe in Him to follow His way of life, to give and to serve in the world of men as He did. When we as individuals are with Him in thought, when we follow His teachings, we increase our own spirituality and at the same time become so filled with His power that we attract to ourselves those who need our help. In His great love for humanity Jesus fed the hungry, clothed the naked, healed the sick, cast out evil spirits. And He said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do."

For our own spiritual salvation and the salvation of the world we must learn and practice unselfishness. The time has come when Truth must prevail in the world or the world will be destroyed. Thus, it becomes the primary mission of each of us to learn to be unselfish, to live the life of service that Jesus taught and which alone can create true brotherhood.

Jesus prayed for Himself, for His followers, and for the world. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil . . . As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world." And to His apostles Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." Isn't this a clear command to all who call themselves Christians to serve as missionaries—to live in the world and to spread Truth?

Many of us do not consider ourselves selfish in the ordinary sense of the word, but nevertheless, we are more centered on the temporal self than on the eternal self, which is the Spirit of truth in us. In a world where material success is the goal of the majority, where the prevailing philosophy is every man for himself and the Devil take the hindmost, it is not always easy to rise above self-interest and learn the way of service.

Material selfishness is relative. It is no hardship for a man of wealth to make contributions to organized charity or to needy individuals. Kahlil Gibran says, "You give but little when you give of your possessions." Jesus said that the widow who put two mites into the treasury gave more than the rich men who contributed large sums, for while they gave of their abundance, she cast in all that she had.

There are many ways to manifest unselfishness

without giving money. To give time to friends or neighbors when your own time seems limited is true altruism. To give with no thought of getting anything in return is altruism. Giving secretly without desire for public acknowledgment is true altruism. The condition of secrecy in giving was commanded by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them." He demonstrated this principle in His own life when He commanded those whom He helped to say nothing of what He had done.

To be overprudent in giving for fear of lack shows a lack of faith. Unfortunately fear of poverty is a race thought outpictured in the world. Like other race thoughts, it seeps into the subconsciousness without the conscious mind being aware of it. To counteract fear of material insecurity, we must work constantly for faith in our ability to realize abundance. We must believe the statements of Jesus: "All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine." "I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly."

Mental selfishness is less common than material selfishness. If any member of a household continually isolates himself to read, to study, or to pursue his own intellectual interests with no consideration for the habits or desires of the rest of the family, he is being mentally selfish. I do not mean that we should never take time to indulge in the things that provide mental stimulation. But we should not neglect the other members of our family by giving all our

time when at home to our own intellectual pursuits.

The young girl's wanting to become a religious recluse is an example of spiritual selfishness. More common is the person who is so intent on his own spiritual welfare that he never concerns himself with the spiritual needs of others. He may read or study for inspiration, go to lectures or to church regularly; but if he never gives out of what he takes in or demonstrates spiritual ideas in daily human affairs, he is manifesting spiritual selfishness. There is no way to avoid the principle so often stated by Jesus that in order to receive we must give. If we are to grow spiritually, we must pass on to others the life and love and light that God so freely gives to us. We must keep the water of life flowing or else it will become stagnant. Many persons, grateful for divine help in time of need, show their gratitude by contributing money to church or charity or by personal service to others. But as time goes on too often they forget the principle of giving and receiving and return to their selfish routine. This is why so many demonstrations of healing are only temporary.

Whatever objective a man may have in his selfishness, whether it is the acquisition of material goods, intellectual power, or personal salvation, he is not following the way of Jesus, which is the way of serving others. The self-centered man may become rich or intellectual or familiar with the letter of spiritual Truth, but he will never gain that inner realization of God which alone brings peace of mind.

It is in our normal everyday existence that we

can do the most in the way of giving—by little friendly acts of consideration and kindness, by understanding attention to the problems and troubles of others, by unvarying courtesy and graciousness to all. If we take time to consider God's lavish gifts to us—life, love, wisdom, joy, and abundance—we shall feel a warm glow of gratitude that will inspire us with a burning desire to give to others. "Freely ye received, freely give."

Most of the troubles of the world are derived from self-interest. War is the result of national self-interest. If we believe that the kingdom of God is within us, if we open the door to God and make Him a constant reality in our lives, and if we devote ourselves to loving and serving our neighbor—if we do these things, then we shall have the satisfaction and happiness that inevitably result from serving others. And we shall achieve blessed peace. We may never become rich, but we shall never want for any of the things we truly need. "Seek ye first the kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

If each individual lives the Truth that he knows and thinks of his neighbor as well as himself, he is working toward his own peace and toward the peace of the world. If, on the other hand, he forgets or ignores God and seeks only his own personal satisfaction, he is contributing to the unhappiness and unrest of the world.

If you are one of those who live for self alone, if your interest is centered exclusively on the better-

ment of the physical conditions of your own life or on the cultivation of your own mental power or even on your own personal spiritualization, you are not doing your share toward bringing peace on earth. If you and the world you live in are to survive, you must strive to eradicate the fault of self-interest and cultivate the habit of interest in your fellow men. You must follow the teachings of Jesus with your heart and not merely know them with your mind. You must serve your God self, not your personal self.

Affirm: I am free from bondage to self. I surrender my personal self to the eternal self, the Spirit of God within me. I think and act for the welfare of others.

You can be helped in your meditation and prayers by learning these beautiful passages from the Bible.

"For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?"

"If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink."

"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away."

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over."

"Delight thyself also in Jehovah;
And he will give thee the desires of thy heart."

"Teach me to do thy will;

For thou art my God:

Thy spirit is good."

"I delight to do thy will, O my God;

Yea, thy law is within my heart.”

“I, Jehovah . . . give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.”

“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of Jehovah thy God which he hath given thee.”

CHAPTER X

Interference

SOME YEARS ago a friend, whom I shall call Peggy, came to me and told me her story. She felt that she had creative talent that she was not using, and she felt restless and unfulfilled. Her children were of school age and no longer needed constant attention.

Her home was small and could be kept in perfect condition with a few hours' work every day. She was eager to express her creative energy in some work other than household, but her husband held the belief that a woman's place is in the home and that she must not seek self-expression anywhere else. She had come to me to ask if I would talk to her husband and try to convince him that without neglecting her maternal or domestic duties she still had time to study some craft or art.

"Henry will listen to you if he'll listen to anyone," she said. "I've come to the point where I feel I *must* do something besides housework and cooking."

Although I never like to interfere in problems between husband and wife, I agreed to talk to Henry and find out more about his attitude. When I repeated to him what Peggy had said and suggested that she find some outlet for an apparent strong need for creative expression, his lips tightened and he

stiffened with annoyance. "I'm not going to let my wife work. It's too bad if I can't support my family. As long as Peggy is married to me, she will not do any kind of work outside our home."

I saw that it was useless to carry the conversation any further, that because of his rigid but honest belief in domesticity as the only proper function of women I had no right to try to influence him.

Sometime later (within the last year or so) Peggy suffered what is commonly known as a nervous breakdown, with moments of extreme hysteria and other moments of almost suicidal depression. She had a complete physical checkup, and the doctor reported that there was nothing wrong with her physically, that she was in perfect condition. "There must be something on her mind that is causing this trouble," he concluded.

Her doctor was not a psychiatrist but like many modern doctors, he understood that mental and emotional disorders are often outpictured in the body. In answer to his questions, Peggy admitted that she loved her husband and family dearly but that she had for years been denied expression of a creative talent she knew she possessed, and it had made her unhappy.

The doctor then talked to Henry and suggested that if he wanted Peggy to be happy he allow her to express herself as she had so long been wanting to do. This time Henry made no objections.

During my talks with Peggy, I aroused her interest in the study of Truth. After a short time we

began to pray together. In one of our prayer sessions, the words of Paul from II Timothy came to me, "For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God." I interpreted this to mean that Peggy should find some means of expressing her creative talent. Making inquiries about education classes offered by the public schools, she decided on a craft that has great possibilities for artistic originality. She is now going regularly to school, and doing work that she loves.

Through prayer and regular weekly lessons with a Unity minister, she learned how to eliminate her discontent and depression and to build up her spiritual resources. She reads the Bible and other inspirational works; she prays regularly and goes to a Truth center to hear Sunday morning services. The help she gets from religion and the satisfaction she has from creative self-expression have given her peace of mind and a broader attitude toward life.

I have given this story because it exemplifies two spiritual principles. The first is that we should not at any time try to force our will upon another. If we see someone making a grave mistake we can, if we are asked, gently try to point it out. Beyond that we have no right to interfere for each of us must live his own life and make his own decisions. Under no circumstances have we the right to prevent an adult from expressing himself in the way he chooses. Even when we believe that he is making a mistake, we have to allow him the right of choice.

The second spiritual principle revealed in the

case of Peggy is one about "sowing" and "reaping." In all the years I have known Henry, I have never seen him so miserable, so deeply concerned as he was over his wife's condition. He said: "I'm at my wit's end. I just don't know what to do. I don't believe I can stand this much longer."

As he did not believe in the power of prayer and was skeptical about what we know as Truth, I could not say the things I would like to have said. But in my meditation, I saw clearly that he was reaping the results of his own mistake in seeking to bend his wife to his will and to block her natural gift. Because she loved him, she yielded in order to keep peace in the home.

Now that every side of her nature is being fulfilled, she is hoping that her faith, expressed outwardly in greater happiness and health, will serve to open her husband's eyes to the light of Truth. She realizes that the manifestation of faith in works can accomplish more than the mere speaking of words of faith, and that the best way to bring others to Truth is by living it in every phase of daily existence.

In our prayers together for Henry we sometimes use a slight variation of the words from the Epistle to the Philippians: "for it is God who worketh in him both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." We believe that our prayers are being answered. Already Henry is proud of the work his wife is accomplishing in school, and we have faith that his mind soon will be opened to the light of Truth.

In the parable of the talents the master, praising

the servant who had increased the five talents left with him, said: "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord." The master reprimanded the servant who had buried his talent and took away the talent. "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away."

Just as the master in the parable required a return on the talent, God means for us to put our individual talents to work so they may develop and increase. We must not let our natural gifts lie fallow, for if we do they will lessen and eventually be taken away. With God's guidance we are led to say and do things that may help others exercise their talents. But we cannot, dare not, impose our will upon them to force them to follow our way, even when we know in our hearts that we are right and they are wrong.

The line of demarcation between loving guidance and interference with normal self-expression is so thin that occasionally it is crossed unknowingly. This is particularly true of parents who, with the best intentions in the world, sometimes exercise authority over their children's thoughts and desires after the children have matured sufficiently to know their own minds. A father may insist that his son go into the family business when the son wants to follow a profession. An ambitious mother may prevent her daughter from marrying the man of her own choice

because he is poor or from a lower social class. Even though the parents' judgment may be right, an adult man or woman should be allowed freedom of choice. If they choose unwisely, they must suffer the consequences and learn from experience. God has given us the power to think for ourselves, to make our own decisions. And often the pain and suffering that follow a wrong decision are the means of bringing us closer to God, of making us realize that the kingdom of God is within us, that through Him we can be reborn. "Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Our god-given power of choice enables us to mold our own lives and to create our own experiences. It is the power by which we learn to know God, to turn to Him for guidance and light so that our every thought and word and deed may be designed according to His perfect plan for us.

When we try to regulate the lives of others, to dictate what they must think or do, then, we are interfering with their right to exercise free will. Paradoxical though it may seem, this desire to dominate the thinking of others is a common fault among those who are just learning spiritual Truth. In their enthusiasm they long to force others to the Truth as they see it. No matter what the motive, such forcible feeding of Truth is a form of interference that is harmful, both to the employer and his victim. Religious domination is no more excusable than is domination of any other kind.

Regardless of how urgently we desire to help those we love, we must remember that they, as well

as we, are children of the Lord and that each one of us must go his own way, according to the will of God for him. We are responsible only to God, and He alone is our keeper.

"Jehovah is thy keeper:

Jehovah is thy shade upon thy right hand" is the way it is expressed in the 121st Psalm, which starts with the beautiful words:

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:

From whence shall my help come?

My help *cometh* from Jehovah,

Who made heaven and earth."

When the urge comes to influence another person who seems to be going the wrong way, let us remember the answer Jesus gave to Peter when Peter wanted to know which of the apostles would betray Him. Jesus said "What *is that* to thee? follow thou me."

In our moments of deep spiritual awareness, we know beyond the shadow of doubt that health of body and peace of mind, come only when we follow the way of Jesus. With human temptations and the press of outer events ever at work to influence and disturb us, we have enough to do to work out our own salvation without assuming authority over the lives of others. Thus, when an impulse stirs us to thwart or restrain the expressed desires of other persons, even if we feel that we would do so for their own good, let us resist the temptation and say to ourselves: "What *is that* to thee?"

If among your relatives or friends there is some-

one who seems to be making a mistake, do all you can to help him see the light; reveal the Truth as you understand it, but never attempt to force him to follow you, and never dictate the way he must go. Give him lovingly into the hands of the Father who is in all of us. "Forbear thee from *meddling with* God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not." Know in the depths of your being that Christ is his shepherd. "I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me."

You can "let go and let God," confident and calm in the assurance that God is working in him to will and to do the thing that is right for him; that God will bring his good into manifestation according to the perfect pattern He has for him.

If you think over your personal relationships, you will probably find that you have not been entirely free from the fault of interference. And if you sincerely wish to eliminate this fault, you will be helped by affirming over and over again: *I leave him in God's hands. I resist all temptation to force my opinions or beliefs upon him, for I know that his indwelling Christ will lead him to the path God means him to take.*

The following passages from the Bible will strengthen and help you:

"If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them."

"But there is a spirit in man,

And the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

"Great in the midst of thee is the Holy One of Israel."

"I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."

"Commit thy works unto Jehovah,
And thy purposes shall be established."

"Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, *even* the Christ."

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Complaining

A YOUNG GIRL occasionally comes to me for spiritual advice. She has been greatly helped by a little scheme I worked out for her when she complained that she was not so popular with the boys as the other girls in her group. "Oh, I know I'm not attractive looking," she lamented. "But why do boys always judge girls by their looks? They never try to find out what a girl is really like."

"Do *you* know what *you* are really like?" I asked.

"Of course, I do."

"Very few persons take time to study themselves," I said. "If they really dig down into their own characters and analyze themselves honestly, they will find traits they hardly know exist."

"I feel that I know myself quite well," she replied stubbornly.

"Let's find out if you do. I'll get a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle of it. On one side you list all your good qualities, on the other side your less desirable ones. Is it all right with you?"

She seemed a bit doubtful at first but decided to try it. On a sheet of paper I drew a line down the center and at the top of the left side wrote *Virtues* and at the right side *Faults*. In between I put the word *but*. I gave her the paper with a warning to be honest in describing herself.

After much thinking, giggling, and erasing she handed me the paper. This is what she had written:

VIRTUES		FAULTS
Kindly instincts	<i>but</i>	often cross and unkind.
A fairly good disposition	<i>but</i>	quick-tempered.
A good student	<i>but</i>	intolerant of those who are not.
Good critical ability	<i>but</i>	sensitive to criticism from others.
Capable in household duties	<i>but</i>	resent having to do them.
A good figure	<i>but</i>	not a neat dresser.
Plenty of advantages	<i>but</i>	often discontented.
A loving nature	<i>but</i>	very jealous.
Try to be just	<i>but</i>	think others often unjust to me.

After I had considered the paper carefully, I asked whether I might add a few opinions of my own. She nodded.

I wrote: "There is not a single quality that you have listed under *faults* that cannot be easily corrected by new thought habits. You can change the character of your thinking so that you will not be cross or unkind, so that you will not lose your temper or be intolerant or sensitive to criticism; and you

can stop complaining about the injustice of others to you. If you but think of the thousands of people all over the world who have no homes, you will be so grateful for your own lovely home that you will do household chores graciously and eagerly. If you but think of the thousands of families that have been disrupted because of war, you will be so grateful for your family's being all together that you will do anything in your power to bring happiness to the family circle. In other words, the way to get rid of discontent and the other faults you mention is to count your blessings and to be grateful for them. Gratitude to God for blessings received awakens a spirit of joy that in turn is expressed in cheerfulness and constant good will. If you want people to like you, stop complaining and cultivate a spirit of joy. If you want true beauty, cultivate a spirit of joy."

She read my notes thoughtfully and then said, "What you are telling me to do is like asking a leopard to change his spots."

"Not exactly," I replied. "The leopard cannot change his spots because he has no power of conscious reasoning. But a human being can remove the spots on his character because he has a mind and free will. The elimination of any bad habit and the development of its equivalent good takes time and hard work. But it can be done, and the end will justify the effort."

"How should I go about it? What must I do?"

"First, you must realize that joy is the natural state of the truly spiritual person, because he knows

that the Spirit of God is joy. In the stillness pray for constant awareness of your oneness with God. Jesus taught us that the kingdom of God is within man, that as we live and move and have our being in Him we increase in happiness and well-being. 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full.'

"That's beautiful," she said. "But specifically what must I do?"

"Every time you find yourself being cross or disagreeable or starting to complain about how the world is treating you, stop and say, '*I am filled with the joy of the Lord.*' Immediately substitute positive thoughts for negative thoughts. The substituting of good thoughts for bad thoughts is the magic formula by which the bad is eliminated and the good created."

The girl left not entirely sure that she could correct her discontent by working for a spirit of joy. But when she came to see me a few months later she was excited and enthusiastic. "It works," she cried. "It really works. My disposition has improved so much that almost everyone notices it, including the boys. I'm getting a lot more invitations than I did before, and the family says I'm easier to live with."

"Good for you! You'll soon find out that the more you fill your mind and heart with joy the easier it is to radiate joy to others. Half the reward of a cheerful disposition is its effect on those about you. You have no idea how much more attractive you are already. You have lost that petulant expression and you have a much more pleasing personality."

I was telling her the truth. Her change of thought in even so short a time was reflected in her face and personality. Like many of us, she had got in the habit of complaining without realizing it.

By nature we are cheerful—yet we are chronic grumblers. We are spoiled by efficient management, good service, and abundant supplies and we consider them our rightful due at all times. Most of us at one time or another indulge in expressions of dissatisfaction over unimportant inconveniences. If a salesman makes a small mistake in an order or a waiter takes too long to bring our meal or a shopkeeper reports something out of stock, we grumble as though the incident were a major calamity.

The oft-repeated quotation:

“Laugh and the world laughs with you.

Weep and you weep alone”

contains a proved truth. The weeper, the grumbler, the loquacious person has few friends. I know a woman whose entire conversation consists of a recital of her various aches and pains. Her only real friend is another woman with the same limited outlook on life. Neither of them has other friends, largely, I believe, because the normal, healthy-minded person shrinks from tales of another's bodily ailments. Most of us know from personal experience that we welcome the cheerful person; whereas, we instinctively avoid the chronic complainer, even when the complaint is not serious. Most of us have problems and trials of our own to overcome. Complaints and discontent from another person merely

increase the difficulty of overcoming our own troubles and of keeping constantly cheerful.

We are such creatures of habit that unless we stop occasionally to take stock of our mental attitudes we do not realize what negative thoughts we have been harboring. Thus, when things in the outer world seem to be going wrong, our first job is to appraise our thought habits; and when they are negative, to discipline ourselves in positive thinking. We can rid ourselves of the habit of complaining by taking our thoughts away from the cause of complaint and by directing them to the things that we know are good. To count our blessings is a sure antidote for discontent. We take for granted much that we should be ever grateful for—a comfortable home, an abundance of good food, the companionship of family, the good will of friends, good health, ready access to books for every taste, free music for every need, entertainment for every level of mentality, and the infinite variety and beauty of nature in sky and field and sea. Yet how many of us take time to appreciate these common blessings? How often do we think of them as blessings and feel grateful for them?

To cultivate a spirit of gratitude for blessings received dissolves every feeling of dissatisfaction within a person or the condition responsible for a seeming injustice. The Psalmist understood this well. Over and over he repeated thanks and praised God for His goodness and mercy. The last five psalms are devoted entirely to praise for the Lord, and em-

bodied in verses throughout the other psalms are many expressions of gratitude. The 136th Psalm counsels thanksgiving. The first verse sets the pattern:

"Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good;
For his loving kindness *endureth* forever."

The other verses ask that thanks be rendered to God for His wisdom and strength, for His creation of heaven and earth and all things therein, for the deliverance of His people from bondage, and for their power to overcome enemies.

Paul epitomizes the necessity of gratitude in the simple verses: "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward."

If we remember to be grateful for our benefits, we shall not lament our shortcomings and deficiencies. Not long ago a young woman came to me full of complaints against her husband. I knew how generous he was to her and to their children, how kind and charitable he was to everyone who came to him for help. But certain little irritating faults blinded her to his goodness. Instead of sympathizing with her as she expected, I tried the scheme that had worked so well with the young girl. I asked her to tabulate in opposite columns her husband's faults and his good qualities. When she had filled in the two columns, the side for good so far overbalanced the other side that she saw instantly how wrong her complaints had been.

"Thank you," she said. "I've been utterly stupid. I'm going to keep this list and whenever I'm tempted

to complain or get irritated I'll look at the many good qualities my husband has."

The basis of the complaining habit is lack of trust in God. If we truly believe in God and trust His omnipresent good, we shall never grumble about our misfortunes or the injustices done us by others. But most of us put our confidence in external things, which are subject to change and destruction. We live largely in our personal consciousness, which is easily affected by people and conditions, rather than in our spiritual consciousness, where the eternal, changeless God dwells.

The source of true limitless joy is the Spirit of God within us, ever waiting to shine forth into radiant manifestation. But we allow our native joy to remain hidden under a fog of doubt and discontent.

We must turn within for comfort and help. We must rise up out of the dust of discontent and lift our eyes to the glory of the Lord. We must be grateful for every single blessing, large or small. We must be so continuously grateful that we never allow a thought of dissatisfaction to remain in our consciousness nor a word of complaint to pass our lips. With this realization comes a deep feeling of thankfulness to God; and our gratitude is made manifest by constant expressions of cheerfulness and good will.

It is true that some people seem to be blessed with natural optimism, while others are, by nature, pessimistic. Yet all of us can develop the habit of

optimism through faith and prayer. The pessimist may have to work harder, but steady faith and regular prayer can make him as cheerful as his naturally optimistic brother.

Truly spiritual people know that the life of Spirit is the way of joy. They no longer believe, as did our Puritan ancestors, that the religious life implies resignation to trouble or pain or that the will of God for man includes poverty, sickness, or misery. They know that He intends us to be happy, joyous, and at peace and they will not resign themselves to anything less.

If you want to contribute to the peace of the world, you must start by consciously trying to eliminate every trace of discontent from your mind and heart and by avoiding any word of complaint. You can learn to feel and to express joy and you can shed good cheer upon all whose lives touch yours.

Affirm: *I am one with the joy of the Father. His perfect joy fills me and keeps me cheerful and contented at all times. I know that God's will for me is ever good, so that nothing but good can come into my life. I enter into the joy of the Lord and I am eternally grateful for the many blessings He bestows upon me.*

Meditate upon these beautiful passages from the Bible.

"I will bless Jehovah at all times:

His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

"Thou wilt show me the path of life:

In thy presence is fulness of joy."

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content."

"Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised."

"Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be made full."

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace."

"Let all those that take refuge in thee rejoice,
Let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest
them:

Let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee."

"A glad heart maketh a cheerful countenance."

Resentment

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DURING THE Christmas rush in a large department store I was waiting for service at the book counter when I noticed a saleswoman who managed to remain calm, courteous, and pleasant in the bedlam around her. Impatient customers were demanding attention, calling questions at her, and some were being generally unreasonable and disagreeable. But the saleswoman never for a moment showed irritation or tension but was gracious, even-tempered, and patient with everyone.

When my turn came to be waited on, she greeted me with a smile and asked if she might serve me.

"I couldn't help noticing your poise and steady cheerfulness," I said. "How do you manage to keep that way in all this confusion?"

"It's really quite simple. It can be summed up in one word."

"And that word is?"

"Love," she answered.

She did not need to explain further, for love radiated from her face and her manner, and I knew that she had reached that high point of spiritual attainment in which the practice of loving-kindness, of unrestricted good will toward everyone is as natural as breathing.

An example of a different form of love came to

my attention a short time ago. A little ten-year-old girl was taken to the hospital. The doctor told her mother that the child must be kept completely quiet and not allowed to see anyone.

"Surely you don't mean me, too!" cried the mother.

"I mean everyone," replied the doctor. "It is important that your little girl not be emotionally upset in any way."

"But I'm her mother! I wouldn't harm a hair on her head."

"Not consciously," said the doctor. "Yet your very love for her would be an emotional disturbance at this point and that is what we must avoid."

The mother, in telling me of this incident, was indignant: "Did you ever hear of anything so absurd? Of course, I'm going to visit her. The doctor doesn't understand that a mother's love can't hurt a child!"

She insisted not only on going to the hospital every day but on staying in her daughter's room most of the time. Her love expressed itself in an outpouring of sentimentality and sympathy that, as the doctor had warned, disturbed the child and retarded her recovery.

To me these two incidents epitomize two different forms of love and at the same time present the difference between them. The saleswoman in her genuine feeling of loving-kindness toward everyone expressed impersonal, universal love, which transcends self and embraces humanity. The mother in being

with her sick child against the doctor's advice expressed specific, extremely personal, and selfish love, which served nothing more than to satisfy her own emotional need.

A boy of sixteen once said to me: "Mother worries about me all the time. She says it's because she loves me so much, and I suppose that's true; but I just wish she wouldn't."

Worry is not a sign of love, although most parents like to think that it is and explain it as such to their children. Fear, which is worry in exaggerated form, is also an ingredient of personal love. We too often fear for those we love instead of praying for them in confidence and in faith. "There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear."

Love in any form predicates a widening of interest, a union with something or someone other than ourselves; thus, it becomes at once a path out of self-consideration. Starting within ourselves, love impels our attention outward and makes us unfold and expand without conscious effort. This unfolding and expansion toward a finite object can be the means by which we mount to that higher plane of devotion which is infinite in scope and identified with all things and all people.

If we control our love for the finite so that it never becomes too personal or selfish, if we make sure that it is serving its object as well as it is serving us, we can grow in love until we reach that state of loving-kindness which Jesus revealed as the way to peace on earth and the brotherhood of man.

Of all the faults of which man is guilty, the greatest disturber of personal and world peace is resentment, which quickly develops into hatred. And hatred is the opposite of love. It is easy to let a small annoyance grow into a big grudge, to fan a smouldering resentment into a burning hate. Yet the Old and New Testaments repeatedly warn us of the danger of resentment in any form and urge a constant attitude of forgiveness and loving-kindness. In Genesis we find the story of Jacob and his sons. When Joseph's brothers, who sold him into slavery when he was a youth, discover that he is ruler of Egypt, they fear his vengeance: "It may be that Joseph will hate us, and will fully requite us all the evil which we did unto him." Their father Jacob sends a message to Joseph, asking forgiveness for the transgressions of his brothers. Joseph's answer is a masterpiece of wisdom concerning forgiveness: "And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?"

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us to cleanse our minds of resentment before we pray; to be reconciled to our brother before we bring a gift to the altar. And He follows this with the command, "Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art with him in the way; lest haply . . . thou be cast into prison." He means that when we hold onto a grudge or nurse a grievance, we restrict our spiritual growth by encaging ourselves in a wall of emotional conflict.

Jesus also warns us to return good for evil. "But

I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." When we retain the memory of a wrong, rehearse it mentally, brood over it with resentment, we not only keep ourselves emotionally excited but we are violating the statement in the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors." Jesus makes the Lord's forgiveness of our transgressions contingent upon our forgiveness of the transgressions of others toward us. He told Peter to forgive "until seventy times seven"—that is, without limit. And He reminds us that our heavenly Father makes the sun to rise on the evil as well as on the good, on the unjust as well as on the just.

We can rid ourselves of resentment by focusing our attention on its opposite—love. The achievement of openhearted love must be our primary goal if we seek harmony and peace, as evidenced in the command that God gave to Moses, "Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and the similar commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," which Jesus gave as being second only to the commandment to love God, and "*like unto it.*"

What are the attributes of love that we must learn to express if we would expand our nature and establish unity in the world? What qualities and habits must we eliminate? Charity, as used in the New Testament, is synonymous with Christian love.

It is beautifully analyzed in the 13th chapter of I Corinthians:

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, *and* is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth."

You will notice that Paul begins by saying that love is more important than the gift of fine speech, even than the "tongues . . . of angels." Without love oratorical eloquence is hollow and meaningless. The gifts of prophecy and faith—even the faith that can remove mountains are nothing without love. Charity to the poor and physical sacrifice profit the giver nothing unless they are accompanied by love.

On the positive side Paul says that love is patient and kind; unenvious, humble, and modest; mannerly, unselfish, even-tempered, unsuspicious, open to truth but closed to evil.

Now let us examine our own way of expressing love and see how it compares with Paul's ideas.

Are we always patient, willing to suffer for those

we love? In this age of rush and tension, are we not more likely to become impatient and emotionally upset? In little things around the house or in the shop, do we remain poised and serene if others seem unkind or unjust to us?

Do we express kindness in all that we do? In the numberless little incidents that are woven into the pattern of our lives do we remember that a gracious word or a bit of considerate attention may brighten the day for someone else?

Can we see our neighbors prosperous without being envious of them, or do we have a feeling of jealousy because they have better homes, finer clothes, newer cars than we have?

Are we humble and modest about the gifts we present to others and the contributions we make to charity, or do we get so puffed up with self-satisfaction that we boast about them to others? Do we remember to give our alms secretly and not to be seen of men?

Are we mannerly and well behaved in little as well as big things, or do we let little things get on our nerves and make us irritable and rude? Are we able to remain courteous in all our contacts, with the lowly as well as with the highly placed?

Are we consistently unselfish, ready to work for the good of others, or does self-interest motivate most of our actions?

Do we remain even-tempered and calm under provocation, or do we anger easily and allow irritation to disturb everyone around us?

Do we have confidence and trust in the people with whom we associate, or are we suspicious and distrustful, always ready to impute an evil motive to their actions?

If we are guilty of any of these negative aspects or fail in the practice of their positive equivalents, we are not expressing love. "But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: and the greatest of these is love."

In his other Epistles, Paul repeatedly expresses the necessity for eliminating anger and hatred and for cultivating love. In the 4th chapter of Ephesians he says: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you."

The same Epistle warns us not to let the sun go down upon our wrath—and to walk in love. The simple phrase "walk in love" epitomizes the whole philosophy of Jesus, for walking symbolizes our daily actions. If every move we make, if every action we take is in and with love, habits contrary to love automatically are dissolved.

At the present time, when there is so much suspicion and hatred in the world, it is well for us to take an inventory of our thoughts and deeds to find out whether we are consistently practicing love or are clinging to habits of thought and action that prevent expression of love.

Every time we nurse a grudge, feel jealous or

envious, show unkindness or intolerance, are critical and condemnatory, or become bad-tempered and angry we are allowing a deadly poison to work in our minds and bodies. Resentment, anger, or hatred in any form is poison with a double-barreled effect—it impedes the expansive action of love in us, and it spreads inharmony and strife over everyone and everything it touches.

It is well at all times to eliminate unloving thoughts and emotions from our minds. Today, when the world so badly needs loving-kindness, it is absolutely essential for each and every one of us to share in the work of ending strife and establishing peace by rooting out of our consciousness every degree of hatred and by cultivating the highest degree of love.

When Paul defines love as the greatest human good because it is eternal, he is saying that love is God. We often hear the expression "God is love," and perhaps we repeat it. But do we ever stop to think what it means?

Every religion teaches belief in some god as the creator of the universe, the originating power back of all creation. The opulence of nature ever available for our use and the limitless opportunities here on earth for work and self-improvement indicate that the power which brings all life into manifestation also provides the proper means for supporting, maintaining, and developing that life. Thus, we see that the original power is not only creative but that it is so concerned with the welfare of its creations

that it places them in an environment in which they can have life and "have *it* abundantly." Could this be anything other than love? Since God is power, God is love.

As we, who are individual creations of God's love, increase in understanding and learn to translate love into outward expression, we become fuller, richer, more lifegiving in every way. We have more peace of mind, health of body, greater wisdom and power in the management of our affairs. When we keep our minds and hearts open to the inflow of divine love we radiate its beauty and goodness over all whose lives touch ours.

We can open our hearts to God's love at any time and in any place. We do not need a special guide or "master"; we do not need a religious organization or a great building. For love does not depend on time, on season, or on place. It is the constant ever-available means of contact between man and God.

Through the exercise of love we expand our nature from the selfish and personal to the unselfish and universal.

Through the exercise of love we make our own lives happier and contribute toward a happier, better world.

Through the exercise of love we reveal our godliness. For "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

If you have been holding onto any degree of resentment, even though it has not developed into

active hatred; if you have let anger eat into your heart and agitate your emotions, you are injecting yourself with a poison that gradually impairs your health and corrodes your happiness. If you have failed to express kindness, courtesy, and the other elements of love to your neighbors, your family, and those with whom you come in contact, you are not living a truly spiritual life, for you are disobeying the great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." If you have allowed resentment in any form to become a habit, you must, if you desire peace of mind and peace on earth, begin now to work for the eradication of the negative habit and for the establishment of the positive habit of love.

Affirm the various qualities of love: *I am kind and tender with everyone. I am generous and loving in my thoughts of others. I seek to walk in love every moment of the day. I try earnestly to obey the commandment which tells me to love my neighbor as myself.*

The many Biblical passages urging the elimination of hate and the cultivation of love can serve as inspiration for prayer and meditation.

"Hatred stirreth up strifes:

But love covereth all transgressions."

"Many waters cannot quench love,

Neither can floods drown it."

"Cease from anger, and forsake wrath."

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God."

"Great peace have they that love thy law;

And they have no occasion of stumbling."

'Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate."

'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him."

'He that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him."

'He that loveth his brother abideth in the light."

'That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith: to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend . . . what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God."

"This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you."

Procrastination

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MR. MICAWBER, a character in "David Copperfield," has become symbolic of the habitual procrastinator, who puts off to-day's action in the fatuous hope that something will turn up tomorrow. Mr. Micawber speaks the well-known words, "Procrastination is the thief of time." Yet he never profits from his own wise words. Improvident, indolent, dilatory, always full of theories and ideas that he never tries to execute, he idles his days away, waiting confidently for something to turn up. So well has he become known that his name is included in our language as a synonym for the word procrastinator, meaning one who puts off until another day or time.

There are not too many Micawbers in the world today, but unfortunately most of us have a trace of the habit of delaying until tomorrow what we should do today. There are several causes for procrastination, the most common of which, perhaps, is sheer laziness, a tendency to defer doing things that we know should be done immediately. Because it does not harm anyone, this kind of procrastination may not seem serious enough to be called a sin. Yet many wise men have considered it a human fault that should be eliminated. In The Epistle of James we find, "Come now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow

we will go into this city . . . ye know not what shall be on the morrow." One of The Proverbs tells us not to boast ourselves of tomorrow, "for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." In II Corinthians Paul says, "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." And Saint Augustine says, "God has promised forgiveness to your repentance; but He has not promised tomorrow to your procrastination."

Easygoing manners of natives in tropical climates, their leisurely pace, their slow-voiced *manana* in response to a request to perform some task are indicative of habitual procrastination. Whether the cause lies in the hot climate or in the temperament of the people, the result is lack of purpose. They become content with laziness, untidiness, squalor, and even disease rather than make the effort required to remedy the condition.

The *manana* or tomorrow habit of thought often leads to neglect of necessary duties or to thoughtless deferment of them until some time in the future. It is a perilous habit, because it indicates lack of organized thinking and an infirmity of purpose that almost inevitably produces work less effective than it could be had the idea or plan of action been put into immediate execution. Also, as James said, we never know what is going to happen tomorrow. Just as we should not worry about the morrow, so we should not rely on its providing time for postponed tasks.

Another reason for procrastination is the feeling of being weighed down by all the things we think

we have to do. In the tense, strained existence of today we are prone to become mentally uneasy because of the variety and multiplicity of our tasks. We waste time regretting our acts of yesterday or thinking fearfully about tomorrow, and we become so distracted that we fail to discriminate the important from the unimportant things. When we let tasks slide that we should do and allow ourselves to worry because of it we become more and more tense and confused.

I have helped to bring order to my affairs by asking myself before giving thought or time to any matter at hand, "How important is it?" As one who for many years has combined domesticity and motherhood with a career of writing and teaching, I am often faced with the problem of how to accomplish all my work and duties in the short time of one day. For many years, before my study of Truth, I used to let the thought of all I had to do make me so uneasy and fearful that I would never get my work done. Naturally, this state of mind prevented efficiency. An affirmation, "*Divine order is now established in my life and affairs,*" spoken whenever I began to feel rushed, helped me to rid myself of tension. It led me to organize my day in such a way that I stopped fussing about all I had to do and realized that a quiet mind, in tune with timeless Spirit, can accomplish everything easily and smoothly. I would do one thing at a time, concentrating on it fully until it was completed. The words of Paul in the Epistle to the Philippians, "But one thing

I do, forgetting the things which are behind," recurred to me constantly. Words from Ecclesiastes, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven," proved equally helpful.

It took me about six months to break the habit of procrastination caused by undirected thinking and tension and to overcome the feeling of being overwhelmed by all that had to be done. Gradually, by realizing that the source of all energy is God and that I always have access to His limitless power, I was able to use my time efficiently and to accomplish calmly and without hurry whatever had to be done. I learned to concentrate on one thing at a time without looking backward or forward. Now each morning before the work of the day begins, I turn to God in prayer and gratitude for the energy that is mine. I then go about my work quietly and confidently.

We students of Truth know that we can overcome any error of mind or body if we turn in thought to God and put our trust in His mighty, loving power. We shall never become confused and overwrought if we only take time to turn to Him in prayer. Where God is, there is always harmony and order. He is with us all the time—He is omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient. He never fails us if we trust Him sufficiently. He who created the universe, who guides the stars in their courses, who regulates the flow of the sea and the order of the seasons will keep us on the rightful path. He will establish order in our lives if we but turn to Him in meditation and

prayer. One of the most majestic passages in the Bible is that in which God talks to Job from the whirlwind. He tells Job to "stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God." He speaks of having laid the foundation of the earth, of creating the rain, the thunder and lightning, the snow and the winds, of providing food for man and beast, of controlling the skies and the seas. And Job answers: "I know that thou canst do all things,

And that no purpose of thine can be restrained."

Those of us who let ourselves become involved in the thousand and one things to be done, who strain and worry and procrastinate would do well to obey God's command to stand still and consider His works. We can learn to rest our nerves and control our outward-pointed minds by taking time for solitary and silent contemplation, by drawing all our mental energies to one point—God. We can gain serenity and poise by communing with the Spirit of God, which is within all of us. We may be tempted to say, "But how can I stop and take time for going into the silence when I have so much to do already?" We can have all the time we need if we organize and regulate our activities in a systematic way. We can accomplish what must be done and fulfill our obligations with greater dispatch and efficiency if we take time out to go into the silence for serenity and guidance. Moments of solitude and silence are as necessary for the spirit as bread is for the body. Keeping mind and body still and listening to the voice of infinite Spirit will put us back on an even

keel and give us a clear perspective of the importance and unimportance of the tasks that confront us. We come out of the silence refreshed and calm, quickened by spiritual energy that can be channeled immediately into unhurried productive activity. We can train our minds to concentrate on one thing at a time and to attack it with enthusiasm and efficiency.

Another contributing cause of procrastination is unwillingness to face issues as they present themselves. In Margaret Mitchell's novel "Gone with the Wind" Scarlett O'Hara repeatedly says: "I won't think of it now, I'll think of it tomorrow. After all, tomorrow's another day." With Scarlett procrastination is a basic character fault—a refusal to consider serious problems in the unconscious hope that postponement may dissipate the trouble. This type of procrastination can be very harmful, particularly when we deliberately close our eyes and minds to ideas or issues that need immediate and careful consideration.

Many of us have a tendency toward a *laissez-faire* attitude. If a subject is unpleasant or seems in some way to threaten our easy and regular way of life, we are prone to put off thinking about it. I do not mean that we should dwell mentally on negative ideas. We know this is wrong spiritually. But it is equally wrong to defer thinking of important matters that may affect us and the whole world. Too often we are frankly indifferent and neglectful of social, economic, or political duties. We thoughtlessly lean on others without knowing whether they are

equipped properly to do our thinking and acting for us. This inertia, this willingness to "let George do it" rather than thinking and doing for ourselves is both unwise and unchristian. Each man must prove his good will as a citizen by giving serious thought to vital problems concerning his country. The Christian must prove his faith by works. "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? . . . by works a man is justified, and not only by faith." The good citizen and Christian will not shut his mind or heart to issues that need his highest spiritual endeavor.

A striking example of public apathy and procrastination of thought was shown in our vapid response to the news that a hydrogen bomb had been exploded with destructive power greater than any instrument of war ever devised by man. But most of us gave it only a passing thought and perhaps uttered a platitude about how terrible it would be if it were ever used. Then we went on with business as usual.

"What else can we do?" someone may ask. Not be afraid, certainly. But by giving the matter careful thought, we can see that there is only one answer—the elimination of war itself. We can start constructively to discover what we, as individuals, can do to promote peace. We can stop relying on someone else to act for us and start relying on our own God-given power to think and act for ourselves. It is appalling that a great crisis in the affairs of the world made such little impression on our minds or

in the routine of our daily living. Nothing can stand against the potential power of the atomic or hydrogen bomb except the power of God working in man. If enough people trust God, constantly pray for guidance, and follow the dictates of Spirit, we have nothing to fear.

Several years ago I heard a minister tell the story of a young girl who was urged by a friend to take up religion. The girl answered: "No, I want to have a good time while I'm young. There's time enough to think about religion when I'm too old to enjoy life." Her premise was faulty on two counts. She assumed that religion automatically precluded enjoyment of life, and she procrastinated in giving it serious thought. The most truly happy persons in the world are those who believe in God and follow a path of spirituality. Religion does not mean renunciation of all worldly pleasures, as the Puritans believed. It means putting first things first and God above all else. Jesus says, "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

In this atomic age we dare not procrastinate in thought. We dare not say, "I'll think about it tomorrow." If we are to be saved, if the world is to be kept from utter annihilation, each and every one of us must think and act now to promote peace, to bring God's kingdom on earth. Only God can prevent the destruction that will inevitably accompany an atomic war. Only world citizenship in the kingdom of heaven, with all God's children following a

pattern of selfless spiritual living, can insure continued citizenship in the kingdom of earth. "Thy kingdom come . . . in earth, as it is in heaven."

Scientists who invented the atomic bomb have also made world unification possible by eliminating our previous concepts of time and space. To work for some form of world government, wherein every nation would yield part of its autonomy in exchange for protection against war, would help to promote peace and to manifest that which "he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." Already some movements toward world unity are under way—the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Defense Community, and other economic and political alliances between states and nations. Only through combined efforts of active, spiritual-minded persons can the vision of world unification become reality. And in these days of crisis every individual has a personal responsibility to do his share in a work that will prevent us from living in the shadow of war. Only when this is accomplished will the world know the true meaning of the words of Jesus: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

We who try to live spiritually dare not delay in giving time and thought to the necessity for world peace and the methods by which it can be created. Our nation is called the leader of the world. We, its citizens, must do our part to help our country lead wisely and well toward the goal of world unity. Let

us not procrastinate in thought, but think and act upon our thought this very day. However, let us act not in fear, "for God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline," but in the high hope that the noble concept of world unity and world peace will not fail if we, as divinely inspired individuals, follow the pattern that God created for us.

If indolence or the pressure of seemingly overloaded days has developed in you the habit of putting off until tomorrow what should be done today, if you postpone facing issues that can be solved only by immediate thought and action, then you must start now—at once—to rid yourself of this habit. With the help of God you can develop habitual promptness, calmness, and order in your way of thinking and acting. You can learn to live each day without fear, confident that whatever may happen in the world the redemption that Jesus promised will be fulfilled if you do your part. "But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

You can affirm: *I do whatever has to be done in its proper time and place. I do not allow regret of the past or fears for the future to disturb my equilibrium or to prevent my acting in the present. I think and act with calmness and orderliness, and I do one thing at a time. In everything I turn to God for guidance, confident that He gives me all the courage, energy, and time I can ever need.*

You will be helped in eliminating the habit of procrastination by meditating on these passages from the Bible:

"Thou shalt not delay to offer of thy harvest, and of the outflow of thy presses."

"Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near . . . shall . . . now go captive with the first that go captive."

"But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh."

"Thus saith Jehovah, Set thy house in order."

"Establish my footsteps in thy word;
And let not any iniquity have dominion over me."

"I have made haste, and delayed not,
To observe thy commandments."

"Though a host should encamp against me,
My heart shall not fear."

"What doth Jehovah thy God require of thee, but to fear Jehovah thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him."

"Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole *duty* of man."

"So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another."

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!"

"I know that my Redeemer liveth,
And at last he will stand up upon the earth."

CHAPTER XIV

The Good Fight

A WOMAN WHO LIVES a truly spiritual life said to me recently: "It seems to me that life is one long test of our power to overcome wrong impulses and habits. No sooner do I seem to have conquered one weakness when another rears its ugly head and I have to get to work on it. Why do you suppose we have to labor constantly to keep as good as we know we should be?"

The answer did not come to me immediately. But as I meditated on her question, a passage from The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians flashed into my mind—the Lord's answer to Paul's petition for relief from the thorn in his flesh. "My grace is sufficient for thee: for *my* power is made perfect in weakness."

What the Lord meant, I think, was that practice in overcoming weakness is necessary for the development of spiritual strength. We cannot grow from "the first man [who] is of the earth, earthy" into "the second man [who] is of heaven" without daily discipline in overcoming impulses of the earthy man and frailties of the natural body.

After forty days and nights in the wilderness, Jesus overcame the temptations of the Devil, who offered Him all the kingdoms and glory of the world if He would fall down and worship him. But Jesus

said, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Paul tells us that we are in all ways the same as Jesus. Yet He was able to overcome the world. When Jesus told His apostles that He was leaving the world, He told them that He had overcome the world and He gave comforting assurance that what He did we, too, can do. "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father."

In the Bible we find many examples of strength growing out of weakness. When Paul said that he died daily he meant that some error in him died so that he could be quickened and reborn in the Lord. He gloried in tribulation because he knew that out of tribulation come experience and new power. And he exulted in the knowledge that he could do all things through the power of God's indwelling Spirit. Although he himself had been healed several times and had healed others, although he had been stoned and left for dead and was able to rise up and go on his way; nevertheless, he continued to suffer the thorn in his flesh rather than utilize the means of healing that undoubtedly were available to him. Why? He gave the answer himself in II Corinthians. After praying three times to the Lord for release from the thorn, he learned that through suffering and humility he could call upon and receive the strength of Christ.

To have a spirit of humility does not mean that we must be obsequious. The first and third Beatitudes

are often misunderstood: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" and "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." To be poor in spirit does not mean to be spiritless, as is frequently interpreted, but rather it means to have a spirit free of human bondage—free of the fears, greed, selfishness, hate, and destructive ideas and emotions that stand between man and God and hinder man's spiritual progress. To be meek does not mean to be servile. The definition of the word *meek* includes "free from self-will; patient and un-resentful; not violent or strong; gentle." Thus, the meaning of these two Beatitudes would seem to be that in order to attain advantages on earth and reach the kingdom of heaven we must free ourselves from the faults of impatience, resentment, and violent emotions. We must give up our stubborn exercise of self-will, our reliance upon human authority, our pride in human accomplishments. We must be gentle, patient, willing to work with and conform to spiritual law. Only through knowing the kingdom of heaven can we inherit the earth.

Through relying on the power of God and on faith in our own essentially spiritual nature, through believing with all our heart that in God we live and move and have our being, we can follow the divine pattern for good that God has designed for each of us. Through prayer and meditation, seeking the kingdom of God, we can achieve steady improvement not only in character but in the outer conditions of life. We can at all times and in all places speak

the word and thus change our lives. The right word brings us into contact with God and keeps us open-minded to His voice and has power to effect an immediate change in us. "Be still, and know that I am God."

Jesus told His followers that the kingdom of God is within, that the Christ is not here nor there but right at hand, that if we seek God we shall find Him. Thus, the activity of the kingdom for each person depends on the quality of his spiritual awareness. Active demonstration of good is proportionate to the earnestness and constancy of his reliance on the presence of God. The kingdom of heaven for each of us is in our active awareness of God and His good. If we continue to allow negative thought habits to dominate our consciousness, if we move on a treadmill of fear, tension, criticalness, intolerance, regret for the past, selfishness, possessiveness, complaint, skepticism, or hate, we are living dark, disturbed, and unpeaceful lives. We are not only bringing down upon ourselves ills of mind and of body but also we are contributing to the ills and tensions of the world.

If we enter a dark room and wish for light, we flip a switch. If we wish to be rid of the dark conditions in life, all we have to do is use the switch of faith to turn on the light of God. But *we* must make the initial effort; *we* must flip the switch. Jesus says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." And He adds that everyone who asks and seeks shall re-

ceive and find; that the door is opened to him who knocks. Just as we must ask for what we desire in the material world, so we must ask God in prayer to fulfill our needs of body and mind.

The 91st Psalm opens with the verse,
"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most
High

Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."
To dwell in the secret place is to live in constant awareness of the presence of God within us. Our freedom of will gives us the power to decide whether we shall live ugly, cramped lives or bring into manifestation the beauty, abundance, and peace inherent in the life united with God. Even though we begin with prayer and the firm belief that God can help us, we must work continuously in collaboration with Him. We must keep the channel between our minds and Divine Mind open and clear so that we may hear and understand His guidance. This means that we must work constantly to eliminate the faults that block the channel and prevent perception of the presence of God.

We receive God's help in proportion to our willingness to seek it and to work with it and to keep our minds open for awareness of His presence. We must look upon God as a loving Father always ready and willing to give good gifts to His children. Jesus says, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

The great prayer that Jesus gave to His apostles begins, "Our Father." Before the time of Jesus, the later Hebrew prophets also expressed the idea of the Fatherhood of God. Isaiah repeatedly invoked God as a father. He said: "Thou, O Jehovah, art our Father; our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name." "But now, O Jehovah, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter." Jeremiah wrote, "Ye shall call me My Father, and shall not turn away from following me." And Malachi said. "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?"

As children of God we have the power to become like God. If we look upon Him as the ideal of all good and consciously and constantly seek Him, we shall increase our native divinity and grow increasingly more Godlike. The concept of our own godliness is stated in the 82d Psalm:

"I said, Ye are gods,

And all of you sons of the Most High."

And Jesus answered the Jews who questioned Him concerning His divinity as follows: "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" He told them that if He did not do the works of His Father they need not believe in Him. Thus, if we but recognize ourselves as potential gods, we shall grow out of our human limitations into spiritual perfection. We shall rid ourselves of the bad habits that plague us and create inharmony in our own little worlds and in the bigger world around us.

Every temptation we overcome, every error we

correct, every battle we fight and win for the right, either within ourselves or without in the world of men, strengthens our character and sends us forward on the path to godliness. The gate is straight and the way is narrow, but those who find and follow the way are the happy people of the world.

Most of us do not find it too difficult to obey the laws of the land or the injunctions embodied in the Ten Commandments. The minor transgressions are the ones that cause us trouble. Little things that may seem unimportant and harmless because they do not harm anyone else nevertheless retard spiritual growth. But whether the transgressions are small or large, the man who would progress spiritually and find peace must learn to overcome them.

If we truly believe the teachings of the Bible, we must become "doers of the word, and not hearers only." We must discipline ourselves in the use of the Truth we know until it is woven into every cell and fiber of our being, until the right way becomes the natural and easy way. Although the words of the Bible point the way to right living and give careful directions, our task is to turn doctrine into deed by following the directions and taking the right path. We must be true to the Spirit of God within us, which means that we must eliminate everything unlike Him. We may slip from time to time and fall down, but every time we have the courage to pick ourselves up and try again we grow in understanding and strength. Every weakness we overcome, every rise we make after a fall is another hurdle taken on

the road to spiritual perfection and peace. If, as Paul did, we regard weakness as opportunity to develop strength, the work of overcoming will be a glorious adventure. With the help of God we can make every error of the natural man a step up the ladder to the spiritual man. "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

The world needs disciplined persons who have achieved total victory over themselves, who have fought the good fight and won freedom and peace. "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few" is as true today as when Jesus said it.

Isaiah said, "Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind is stayed on *thee*." The peace of God is a constant state of inner serenity. It is a living, vital force that we receive not from the world but from God. But we can give it to the world only if we achieve victory over ourselves, if we overcome our frailties and bad habits.

The task of unifying the different creeds, races, nationalities of the world so that they can live together in a spirit of brotherhood requires not only true vision on the part of political leaders but also the supreme effort of every person of every country to overcome his own errors and transgressions. Only by steadfast faith and practice in realizing the presence of God can the peoples of the world be freed from bondage to negative thought habits and find peace. For peace, like freedom, must come from within—it cannot be imposed from without.

With the help of the Spirit of God within us, we have power to overcome every one of our faults. We can discipline ourselves to the law and order of the kingdom of God so that nothing can ever tear down or destroy our spiritual defenses. We can be "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

If you are restless, discouraged, or fearful of the future, if you are standing on the treadmill of a dull, cramped existence, you can find peace if you but substitute God's will for your own selfish personal will. There never has been a man or woman who turned to God in faith who has not been rewarded by new strength, courage, and peace. No one who has claimed God's life and love and light in perfect faith has ever been denied. You can prove the existence of God by constant effort and experiment with spiritual law. You can become one with the millions who have proved that God *is*—those people of faith who have demonstrated health and prosperity and peace by daring to seek Him and to put their perfect trust in Him. You have only to try prayer conscientiously to learn that prayer is answered. You will find by experiment that living according to the commands of God brings practical results in the fulfillment of all God's promises for health, abundance, and serenity.

If you truly wish peace and security for yourself and the world, you must have faith that they are possible and you must work tirelessly to do your share in manifesting them. You must be unswerving

in your loyalty to God by living up to your highest aspirations, by overcoming every fault and frailty while seeking perfection. "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away."

As you carry on the fight to overcome imperfection, you will come into the highest freedom, the deepest peace you have ever known. You need not fight alone, for you have God's promise of His help. "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble:

I will deliver him, and honor him."

Let us, therefore, fight the good fight. Let us be able to say, as Paul did, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

And let us constantly praise and give thanks to God.

"O give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good;
For his lovingkindness *endureth* for ever."

"Jehovah is my strength and my shield;
My heart hath trusted in him, and I am helped."
"Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power,
and the glory, and the victory."

"Let us follow after things which make for peace."
"Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee;

Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee:

Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

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